

Bavarian News

Vol. 5, Nr. 16

U.S. Army Garrisons Grafenwoehr, Hohenfels, Ansbach, Schweinfurt, and Garmisch

August 19, 2009

GARMISCH

TEAMWORK

Marshall Center class graduates diverse group including Israelis, Palestinians

PAGE 6

HOHENFELS

IN THE FIELD

Soldiers provide healthcare for Afghan families

PAGE 10

ANSBACH

ROAR!

Children of the chapel celebrate summer, faith during jungle-themed Vacation Bible School

PAGE 21

SCHWEINFURT

WELCOME

Battalion completes smooth relocation to garrison

PAGE 23



BACK TO SCHOOL!

It's that time again! School begins Aug. 31. For information about school orientation dates, tips for a successful school-year, contact information and more, See page 24.

What you're looking for

Command Message	2
News	3-4, 20
Retiree Corner	3
What's Happening	12-13
Travel	15
Medical	16
Blackhawk News	18
Back to School	24
AAFES	26-27

View photos of community events and celebrations at www.flickr.com/photos/usagrafenwoehrsets

Online survey calls for opinions about programs, services related to the Army Family Covenant

IMCOM-E Press Release

Do you have an opinion you want to express to senior Army leadership about programs and services you receive at your garrison? Now's your chance.

The Aug. 15 unveiling of a new, online survey allows you to express your frank opinions about anything related to the Army Family Covenant, and just what you think it's done or not done for you and your family since its inception two years ago.

"The USAREUR commanding general realizes that families in Europe have unique needs relative to our counterparts back in the States," said Lt. Col. Chris Farrell, special assistant to the commanding general,

who is providing oversight to The Army Family Covenant Assessment. "The Army Family Covenant is making a difference for our Soldiers and families, and this survey will help us systematically improve support programs and services so we can do even better."

The survey will evaluate just how well the Army Family Covenant meets the needs and expectations of Soldiers and families in Europe, and to maximize positive outcomes for the future. The Army Family Covenant Assessment is the first initiative of its size and scope in the Army, and it is the first large-scale, integrated study of the Covenant's effectiveness within a major command.

See AFC Page 25

Tell Army leadership what you think.

Take the AFC survey at www.armymwr.com/fmwrc/AFC/survey.htm.

A show of support



Photo by Spc. Jerry Wilson

Country music artist Steve Wariner greets Charlotte Larson, 4, daughter of 1st Sgt. David Larson, 2nd Stryker Cavalry Regiment during a performance, Aug. 6. Wariner took a break from his tour schedule to visit the Grafenwoehr Training Area and show his support for the troops. For full coverage, See page 4.

Customer services requests feedback, input

by MELYNDA WEAVER
USAG Grafenwoehr CSO

Customers who live, work, or do business at U.S. Army Garrison Grafenwoehr have the opportunity to rate the importance and performance of garrison services, Aug. 24 - Sept. 18, by logging onto www.myarmyvoice.org.

The 2009 annual Customer Service Assessment is the Installation Management Command's annual Army-wide program for collecting customer feedback in order to evaluate and improve the delivery of installation programs and services.

The assessment is intended to answer the all-important question affecting resource allocation in IMCOM, "Does

it matter to Soldiers and to their families?"

This web-based survey asks a series of demographic questions that directs individuals to answer questions in accordance to the services they use.

For example, Family Members and Retirees will not be asked to rate services like Central Issue Facility or the Ammunition Supply Point - two services used by Soldiers and their leaders.

Within the survey, customers are asked to rate service "performance" on a scale of 1 (very poor) to 5 (excellent), and "importance," also on a scale of 1 to 5. The assessment will ask that all low ratings be explained so importance and performance issues

can be clearly identified.

The survey takes 15 to 20 minutes to complete and covers services vital to the community's quality of life like family housing, Family Morale, Welfare, and Recreation programs and the postal service center.

Many may want to know how this is different from the Interactive Customer Evaluation system and the Community Action Council.

ICE provides the leadership with information on a series of individual experiences at a service, the CAC is a forum to resolve a particular concern affecting the entire community while the CSA provides installation leaders with a big picture of how well each service is performing

and how important it is to the community at a specific point in time.

The data allows important but underperforming services to be targeted for improvement and shows changes in performance of services over the 2008 CSA.

The CSA is administered by the Customer Management Services program.

Customer management is designed to bring the voice of the customer into the commander by continuously capturing feedback.

For more information on the 2009 CSA or the CMS program contact Melynda Weaver, Customer Service Officer, at 09641-83-8881 or usaggrafenwoehr.cms@eur.army.mil.

Soldiers urged to act now for GI Bill benefits

by Navy Lt. JENNIFER CRAGG

Special to the Bavarian News

Servicemembers interested in using the new Post-9/11 GI Bill benefits this fall are encouraged to contact the Veterans Affairs Department soon to determine their eligibility, the VA's director of education said.

"The reason we opened the door early on May 1 (was) so that we can manage this workload effectively; we expected a significant demand," Keith Wilson told bloggers and online journalists during a "DoD-Live" bloggers roundtable.

"We wanted people to come in as quickly as possible because the sooner we can get that eligibility determination out of the way, the better

See GI Page 25

Army 'Idol' invites singers

by JOY AWE
Bavarian News

The fifth-annual Operation Rising Star Competition will come to Grafenwoehr Sept. 11 at 7 p.m. at the Performing Arts Center.

The American Idol-style competition is open to all singers who are active duty Soldiers, reservists, National Guard, or military family members eighteen years and older.

"This is going to be a fun time," said Joline Powell, director of the Grafenwoehr Performing Arts Center. "If nothing else, just come out and have fun. Give it a shot - what have you got to lose? You could win a trip to L.A. and record a demo CD. It's a great way to meet people, get out in the community and see what's going on, come and check out what the theatre's doing, and find out about other MWR programs."

All those who qualify at the Sept. 11 audition will be invited back to compete before an audience the following week. The See OPERATION Page 25

COMMANDER'S MESSAGE



We need you to help improve local, Army-wide programs, continue to fight stigma

Last week, Soldiers, family members and Army civilians participated in an Army Family Covenant focus groups, providing their opinions about the programs and services they receive at our garrison.

That was just part of the survey process.

This week, an online survey became available for those of us stationed in Europe and other geographic regions.

The survey specifies the region (for us, Europe) and then the appropriate installation. Go to the link at the garrison's Web site, www.grafenwoehr.army.mil, to take the survey.

The survey lets you evaluate your experience with programs



and services such as health care, housing, youth services and single Soldier programs, as well as FMWR and other quality-of-life programs.

And please remember, expressing positive input about programs and services is just as important as expressing negative input.

If you have a program or service that is important to you, your support is essential to sustaining it. Your input is crucial and helps determine how resources will be allocated in the future. In a nutshell, the Army Family Covenant survey tells us how programs and services are working Army-wide.

Just as important as the Army Family Covenant, the Customer Service Assessment opens Monday.

The Customer Service Assessment is the Installation Management's Command's tool for reviewing how our garrison services are performing.

This assessment is about (1) how well we are doing in providing programs and services and (2) how important are the services to our community.

The link for Customer Service Assessment will be posted next to the Army Family Covenant online survey on our garrison Web site. Both surveys will be open

until mid-September, so let us all participate now to help us improve our quality of life.

Suicide prevention is also an issue that the Army is seeking better ways and means to reach those needing help.

The garrison has established its first "Suicide Prevention Task Force," and we are working to make it easier for members of our community to seek help.

We want to make sure we all know who to contact (whether medical, religious or family counseling), and make the names

and numbers of our experts readily available.

Most importantly, we want to remove the stigma of seeking help.

Mental health is just as important as physical health.

Raising awareness to the dangers of untreated depression, post traumatic stress disorder, traumatic brain injuries and other mental health issues is a moral leadership challenge and a personal obligation.

It may be one of us, a family member, or our buddy who needs understanding and support, and most importantly, professional help.

Help us get the word out and keep our community Army Strong.

*Col. Chris Sorenson
Commander, U.S. Army
Garrison Grafenwoehr*

If you have a program that is important to you, your support is essential to sustaining it.

Military mom discusses experience of family separation, return



JACEY ECKHART
On the Homefront

After eight years of war, the hurrying passengers in Savannah airport must have been used to this scene. I was.

A military mom chased a toddler in a purple shirt. A preschooler with tight blonde curls zoomed around with a Welcome Home Daddy sign that he had scribbled all over.

It was something about his sister stopped me in my tracks. She looked like every other ten year old in the country. One of those ruffly peasant shirts. Fresh jeans. Bright white sneakers pressed together in the spot where her mom told her to stand.

And such a look of expectation on her face. A look worn only by those of us who have truly missed someone. Longed for them. Cried over them at night when no one was listening.

The girl leaned forward at the waist and bounced on her toes as if the gravitational pull of her body could bring her daddy

sooner.

I paused to talk to the mom. "Where is your husband coming home from?"

"Just Arizona," she said, knowing strangers like me probably expected her to say Iraq or Afghanistan. "Just training."

I took their picture for them. What military spouse has a picture of herself on Homecoming Day?

I know I don't. But as I took the picture, I couldn't help but think about that one word "just." As in, "just" in Arizona and "just" in training.

I don't think there is any such thing as "just" in military life, do you?

If a service member's absence was long enough to cause signs to be made or to cause a ten year old to cry with happiness in her daddy's arms, I'm thinking there is no "just."

That young mom had played the moment exactly right. Every time our service members leave us, every time they come home, it counts. She knew it. Her kids knew it. Her

service member couldn't help but know it - and I envied him.

We all need that feeling.

We all need to have someone nice to come home to. Maybe even more than we think we do.

Recently I picked up Ilene Philipson's *Married To The Job: Why We Live To Work and What We Can Do About It*.

Philipson is a sociologist and psychotherapist who observed in her practice a national change in the way we feel about life at home.

She writes, "As more of us work and work longer hours, and as technology increasingly saturates our home lives, fragmentation and isolation can make home a pretty empty place."

It's the kind of thing that makes people all over the country linger at work, brood over work concerns

at home, text work friends while in the same house with family. And family members don't care because they are busy with Netflix or Hulu or Facebook.

Philipson calls the phenomenon "less to

come home to/less to go out for."

I can see what she means, especially when it comes to our service members. At work, our guys feel needed, trained, praised, involved, intrigued, energized, proficient.

They may feel frustrated and bored a lot of the time, too, but they are undeniably necessary.

At home, the necessity of their presence is less evident. After all, they think we spouses are rock stars, able to hold down a job and three kids and get the oil changed on time, no problemo.

It is easy for them to think that the military needs them more than we do. That just isn't so, granted, but our service members aren't home in the moments we long for them most. They can't really know the way that we at home know.

That's why I think homecoming rituals are so much more important for military families than for anyone else in the country.

They help us express the meaning that gets lost as soon as the dishwasher needs emptying and the preschooler spills Duplos all over the living room floor and kicks them under the couch.

The presence and absence of our service members define family life profoundly.

So Welcome Home Daddy.

Welcome Home Mommy.

We just can't do without you.

Calling TLF



Copyright © 2008 Julie L. Negron, all rights reserved



Bavarian News

Grafenwoehr, Hohenfels, Ansbach, Schweinfurt, and Garmisch

Producer: MILCOM Advertising Agency

Roswitha Lehner

Zeilaecherstr. 35 · 92637 Weiden · Telefax 0961-67050-32

Internet: www.milcom.de

Bavarian News is an unofficial biweekly publication authorized by AR 360-1. Editorial views are not necessarily those of the Department of the Army. The paper is an offset publication prepared and edited by the U.S. Army Garrison-Grafenwoehr Public Affairs Office. Bavarian News is printed by Werbeagentur und Verlag Roswitha Lehner and distributed every other Wednesday. Circulation is 9,800 copies. Submissions are welcome. Send letters to the editor and commentaries to PAO, Unit 28130, Attn: Bavarian News, APO AE 09114, or e-mail them to usagnews@graf.eur.army.mil. Telephone the Bavarian News at 475-7113 or fax to 475-7935 with story ideas and events.

USAG G Commander
Col. Chris Sorenson

USAG G Public Affairs Officer
DSN 475-8103, CIV 09641-83-8103
Kim Gillespie

Bavarian News Editor
DSN 475-7113, CIV 09641-83-7113
Mary Markos

Assistant Editor
DSN 475-7775, CIV 09641-83-7775
Melissa Wolf

Grafenwoehr Correspondent
DSN 475-7113, CIV 09641-83-7113
Amy Newcomb

Garmisch Correspondent
DSN 440-3701, CIV 08821-750-3701
John Reese, USAG Garmisch PAO

Schweinfurt Correspondents
DSN 354-1400, CIV 09721-96-1400
Emily Athens, Sandra Wilson

Hohenfels Correspondent
DSN 466-4917, CIV 09472-83-4917
Kristin Bradley

Ansbach Correspondents
DSN 468-1600, CIV 0981-183-791
Ronald Toland

Reading program enhances understanding of German history, replicates Berlin Wall

Story and photo by
JOY AWE
Bavarian News

Thirty-three Grafenwoehr and Vilseck children gathered with family members and library staff Aug. 10 at Dick Hauter Lake on Camp Heritage to tear down a symbolic replica of the Berlin Wall as the culmination of the U.S. Army Garrison Grafenwoehr Libraries summer reading program, Celebrating 20 Years of Reunited Germany.

The children made bricks to build the wall in a series of craft sessions, using techniques such as graffiti and paper mache. Throughout the six-week reading program, 136 children read, made crafts, ate candy and learned German History.

"I think it was kind of cool how they introduced to all the younger kids how they're living in a country that they don't really know a lot about, and it was once divided and now we're celebrating it being together for twenty years," said eleven-year-old Shem McConnell of Vilseck.

The program centered on the children's book "Mercedes and the Chocolate Pilot," by Margot Thies Raven, in which an American pilot, Lt. Gail Halvorsen, drops candy from his

plane to waiting Berlin children in need of something to look forward to.

One afternoon during the reading program, teams of firefighters from Grafenwoehr and Vilseck recreated Halvorsen's Berlin Airlift candy drops, to the delight of the children participating in the summer reading program.

"A lot of the kids loved it when the firefighters came and dropped the parachutes from the ladder on the fire truck," said McConnell.

While most summer reading programs like to keep tally of the number of books read or minutes spent reading, Kathy Henderson, programming coordinator at the Grafenwoehr Library, prefers to focus on ensuring that everyone has a good time and learns something about German history.

"We're happy if they read at all," said Henderson. "This summer was a way to educate in a fun way, without saying how horrible this time was, to teach our patron's children about a time that maybe even our patrons were too young to remember. It's a fun thing to remember all this stuff with the kids."

"It was a very interesting time," continued Henderson, "We felt like as Germany begins moving into the fall and the celebration of 60



Participants from the Grafenwoehr and Vilseck Library summer reading program knock down the 'Berlin Wall' Aug. 10 at the summer reading program's culmination celebration.

years of democracy and 20 years of reunification, that we should bring that lesson home to our community as we grow and change."

Parents were not excluded from the fun and learning taking place at the libraries this summer.

"We're coming in at the end of the summer program and giving parents some information and resources that will help them to not let what the kids

have learned over the summer end," said Christie Foster, representing the Parent to Parent organization, an organization devoted to helping parents share resources and successfully raise well-adjusted military children.

"We want to give them resources to help the parents promote reading at home, and also make learning fun, and make connections from what they're reading in books to real-life

experiences and activities, like what we did here today," continued Foster.

"By tearing down the wall, putting that real-life experience with what was read to them in Mercedes and the Chocolate Pilot, they now have a better concept of the Berlin Wall," she said.

To see more photos of the libraries's summer reading celebration, go to www.flickr.com/photos/grafibraries.



On the Job

Usually the seats in a Stryker vehicle are filled by Soldiers in uniform. On Aug. 5, however, the seats were occupied not by Soldiers preparing for war, but by children celebrating summer when a group of after serves from Eschenbach had the opportunity to climb in and around the Strykers with chaplain Thomas Jeschner as part of their visit to the Grafenwoehr Training Area.

Spc. Xavier Bianchi from the 2nd Stryker Cavalry Regiment gave the 27 ministrants and 11 adults the chance to experience the feeling of being a Soldier. Following their tour, the group visited the air field where Landstuhl-based Soldiers gave the children information and let them explore their helicopters. The children also visited the Grafenwoehr Army Airfield fire department and the GTA air traffic control tower. Before leaving the area, the youth received a "pleasant refreshing shower," said Jeschner, from the fire truck.

For many of the participants, the tour marked their first visit to the garrison. "Not like in Grafenwoehr, schools in Eschenbach usually don't visit the base," explained Waltraud Dobmann, chaplain's assistant. The trip is an annual part of the youths' summer camp.

Photo by Veronica Noessner

RETIREE CORNER

Preparing documents eases stress during time of grief

by DAVE STEWART
Graf Retiree Council President

In the last installment I said I wanted to review the documentation one needs in preparation for death. Presently I'm in the process of assisting a spouse pull together her files and paperwork in case her seriously ill retiree husband dies.

Fortunately, she has everything in order, but this is not always the case.

Retirees are reminded frequently of the important responsibility of ensuring the deceased and survivor paperwork is in order and quickly within reach.

When a retiree dies in Germany there are immediate steps that must be taken.

First, the surviving spouse must report the death to the U.S. Consulate in Munich or Frankfurt.

They will issue a Report of Death of American Citizen Abroad. Secondly, report the death to the Casualty Assistance Officer at the U.S. Army Garrison Grafenwoehr.

While there are many survivor guides available to assist retirees, I found the latest publication from the Baden-Wuerttemberg Garrison to be an excellent reference tool.

I have taken their outline on death and documentation and re-printed it in part here.

Most of the following documents are necessary when applying for benefits and settling an estate, and you, as the next of kin, should know the whereabouts of

the documents listed and have access to them. You should never give the original document of a permanent, personal, or family record to another person - even for business purposes.

Certified copies have all the legal status of the original; using them ensures that when the original is needed again it will be available. The local legal assistance office should be contacted to determine if, in fact, certified copies are necessary, and if so, the best way to obtain certified copies of all documents if needed.

Copies of documents can be notarized by the Legal Assistance Office.

To apply for benefits:

- Valid passport of deceased. The passport must be invalidated by the appropriate U.S. Consulate before the "Report of the Death of an American Citizen Abroad" will be issued. That document then serves as a death certificate.

- Death certificates: Death certificates are issued by the local authorities. These may be needed to claim commercial life insurance benefits.

The Special Consular Section of the U.S. Consulate will prepare a "Report of the Death of an American Citizen Abroad" when provided a copy of the official death certificate; ask for a minimum of 10 copies of this document since this document must be used when dealing with U.S. authorities, banks and insurance companies. If this copy does not have the cause of death

shown, some benefits may not be paid.

Therefore the attending doctor must prepare a letter clearly stating the cause of death and this letter must accompany the copy of the death certificate and passport when sent to the consulate. Natural causes is not sufficient.

Marriage certificate and/or divorce papers, if either the deceased or the spouse were ever married before.

- Immigration and/or naturalization papers if applicable.

- Separation documents from each period of military service, i.e., DD Form 214(s), (Certificate of Release or Discharge from Active Duty) and a copy of the retirement orders if reason for separation from service is not shown on latest DD 214 as "retirement." It is absolutely essential that this document be found.

- Military health records pertaining to condition of serviceman at time of retirement plus all correspondence with the Veterans Administration.

- Social Security number/card. (For all family members).

- Valid ID card of deceased.

- Last (or recent) retiree pay statement from DFAS-Cleveland.

Here are some important telephone numbers to keep:

U.S. Consulate Frankfurt am Main

- Federal Benefits Unit, 069-7535-2400; Fax 069-7535-2441
- Special Consular Services (to report a

death), 069-7535-2515

- Passport Section, 069-7535-2304

Defense Finance Accounting System

- DFAS Retired and Annuitant Pay Customer Service, 001-800-321-1080; Fax 001-800-982-8459; Web Site www.dfas.mil/retirepay.html

U.S. Army Garrison Grafenwoehr

- Casualty Assistance Officer, 09641-83-8539
- Legal Assistance Officer, 09641-83-7114

TRICARE

- Health Benefits Advisor, 09641-83-7424

Department of Veterans Affairs

- Information on VA Benefits, 001-800-827-1000

- National Service and Veterans Group Life Insurance, 001-800-669-8477

- VA Foreign Desk, Philadelphia, Pa., 001-412-395-6272

It is difficult to think clearly in the immediate period after the death of a retiree or spouse occurs, therefore I strongly suggest that you ensure you have everything organized in advance.

And one final thought, remember that USAG Grafenwoehr's annual Retirement Appreciation Day is scheduled for Oct. 24.

There will be representatives from DFAS, the federal benefits unit, legal assistance, mortuary affairs, ID card support, and limited medical and dental services. More on all of this next month, but mark your calendars. This is a great time to clear up any questions you may have on your forms and files in the case of death.

Country music artist rearranges tour schedule to pay visit to troops

Story and photo by
Spc. JERRY WILSON
2SCR Public Affairs Office

Members of the 2nd Stryker Cavalry Regiment received a visit from one of the premier voices in country music recently.

County Music Association award winning singer-songwriter Steve Wariner took time out from his busy tour schedule to pay a visit to the Troopers of the 2nd Stryker Cavalry Regiment.

According to his wife Caryn, Wariner wanted to take the time to visit some Soldiers in places that don't get visited regularly by celebrities.

While enroute to a concert in Belgium, arrangements were made by the 3rd Squadron of the 2SCR for Wariner to stop by and say hello.

Accompanied by his wife and close friend Steve Robinson, Wariner started his visit with a trip to the ranges where he visited with 2SCR mortar teams.

Wariner received a crash course in mortar firing and took the time to meet and talk with each Soldier. According to Staff Sgt. John Mills of 1st Squadron, the men were really excited by his visit. "Most of the guys out here are country fans," said Mills. "But when they saw that he took the time to come out here and

really understand their hard work that really fired them up."

After meeting with Dragoons out on the ranges of the Grafenwoehr Training Area and getting a firsthand look at what they do, Wariner headed to the motor pool of 3rd Squadron, 2SCR where he proceeded to perform for the Soldiers and their family members.

"I just want to say thank you from the bottom of my heart," Wariner said to the crowd. "Thank you and your families for your service."

"You make it possible for guys like me to do what we do," he continued. "I don't want to get real preachy, but thank God for your service and what you all do for us. God bless you all."

Wariner serenaded the crowd for an hour, playing a variety of his hits including "Life's Highway," "The Weekend" and many more.

According to Lt. Col. Bryan Denny, 3rd Squadron Commander, the concert was a rousing success.

"There are two kinds of people in this audience," Denny said. "Those who are fans of Steve Wariner and those who are fans of Steve Wariner after today."

Wariner concluded his visit with a trip to the Warrior Transition Unit. At the WTU, Wariner talked with many of the Soldiers and autographed compact discs for the troops.



A Wolf Pack Soldier teaches Steve Wariner the basics of mortar firing during Wariner's visit to the Grafenwoehr Training Area Aug. 6.

TOUGH COMPETITION

Sgt. 1st Class Aaron Beckman of U.S. Army Europe's Joint Multinational Training Command (left) moves while JMTC's Sgt. Robert Murray (center) provides cover with the rest of their squad during competition on the Military Operations on Urban Terrain site at the 2009 U.S. Army Europe and Seventh Army Soldier of the Year and NCO of the Year Competition in Grafenwoehr, Aug. 12. Beckman is competing for this year's NCO of the Year title and Murray is vying for Soldier of the Year honors.

To view more photos of the Soldier and NCO of the Year competition, visit USAREUR's Flickr site at www.flickr.com/photos/usareur_images.

Photo by Sgt. Daniel J. Nichols



COURT MARTIALS

The following court martials were reported by 7th Army Joint Multinational Training Command Deputy Staff Judge Advocate's Office.

■ At a general court-martial convened in Vilseck Aug. 3, Sgt. Matthew R. Madden, 5th Maintenance Co., 18th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion in Grafenwoehr, plead guilty to three specifications of Article 112a (manufacturing, distributing and using marijuana) and one specification of Article 92 (violating Army in Europe regulation 600-1, by possessing drug-abuse paraphernalia).

The military judge sentenced Madden to be reduced to the grade of E-1, to forfeit all pay and allowances, to be confined for one year and to be discharged with a bad conduct discharge.

■ At a General Court-Martial convened in Vilseck Aug. 4, Spc. Raymond A. Verrill, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 2nd Squadron, 2d Stryker Cavalry Regiment in Vilseck, plead guilty to one specification of Article 125, forcible sodomy, and one specification of Article 107, false official statement.

Verrill enlisted in the U.S. Army in 2006, and deployed in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom with 2nd Infantry Division as an infantryman. Verrill arrived to 2SCR in October 2008, prior to their redeployment, as a combat medic.

The military judge sentenced Verrill to be reduced to the grade of E-1, to forfeit all pay and allowances, to be confined for three years and to be discharged with a dishonorable discharge. The offer to plead guilty contained a 18-month confinement cap.

Year of the NCO Spotlight



www.army.mil/yearofthenco

Master Sgt. Michael Cavalier

Age: 45
Current Unit: JMTC
Current Position: JMTC Command Chaplain, NCOIC
Component: Active Army
Current Location: Grafenwoehr, Germany
Hometown: Sparta, Illinois
Years of Service: 19



Rugged and stern-looking, Master Sgt. Michael Cavalier, Joint Multinational Training Command chaplain's assistant, looks-like he should be in the infantry, or maybe a tanker. Who would have guessed he'd be a Chaplain's assistant for his entire career, which is 19-and-a-half-years to date. "I like helping Soldiers and making a difference in their lives," said Cavalier. "I find lots of opportunities to do that as an NCO, and as a chaplain's assistant." Cavalier often mentors and counsels Soldiers looking for advice on their careers and advancement opportunities, and Soldiers who have relationship or marriage issues. Those that might just need someone to listen.

"The Chaplaincy is about being available for all Soldiers no matter what their religious background," said Cavalier. "The Chaplaincy is about providing free exercise of religion in a pluralistic environment, Catholic, Protestant, Buddhist, Muslim, and Wicca." During his career, he has seen the full gamut and remains open and nonjudgmental. "Our primary role is to act as advisor to the Command on issues of morals, morale and religion" said JMTC Chaplain Lt. Col. Scott Hammond. "One of the things that make Cavalier exceptional as a chaplain's assistant is that he is an advisor that is sought out by the highest levels of Command." Most people confuse the chaplain's assistant's position with being a driver, or an administrative clerk, but Cavalier can counsel and mentor, and a Soldier can expect the same level of confidentiality, as one would expect from the Chaplain. Hammond said Cavalier is a consummate professional 24/7 and has even served as the acting company first sergeant numerous times because he is such a respected leader.

When asked if he had any advice for young Soldiers, or those who may need a little inspiration, Cavalier offered the following advice. "Remember the basics - Lead by example, if you compromise your integrity you compromise your ability to lead," he said. "Remember the human aspect of what you're doing. You're not dealing with a problem. You're dealing with a Soldier." There is an old adage that says, "people don't care how much you know, until they know how much you care. Cavalier is someone who knows a lot and cares for people," said Hammond.

Terrorism course brings common goals to diverse officials, fosters collaboration

Story and photo by
YVONNE LEVARDI
Marshall Center PAO

Seventy-five participants from 45 countries, including Israel and the Palestinian Territories, graduated from the Program on Terrorism and Security Studies July 31 at the George C. Marshall European Center for Security Studies.

The five-week course included a wealth of classroom study as well as hands-on participation during a field study to Paris, France.

The program boasts several success stories which involve colleagues from different countries, who met in the PTSS, working together to solve or assist with terrorist situations as well as routine interaction between countries that would have been difficult without the personal contact.

A total of seven Israelis and three Palestinians have attended the PTSS since 2002.

"It took a great deal of work (to get Israeli and Palestinian participation)," said Marshall Center Professor Nick Pratt. "We hope the experience at the Marshall Center will pay dividends in formal settings where Israeli government officials are dealing with Palestinian officials – and that's happened already."

"With virtually no effort at all, two Israeli intelligence officers were

permitted to go to an Arab country and to observe very sophisticated counterterrorism training," Pratt said.

Networking among the counterterrorism professionals is also key, Pratt said. Having a diverse group participate in the course helps facilitate the study of global issues, said course director Dr. Chris Harmon.

"Almost any student among our 75 can have a detailed discussion with a colleague from an adjoining country about a regional problem," Harmon said. "That's true in Latin America and Africa just as it is in Eurasia. Transnational problems such as drug trafficking can be addressed which we could not do if we only had people from Europe here."

The five-week resident course is for military officers, government officials and police administrators. Participants should be currently working in mid- and upper-level management positions of counterterrorism organizations throughout the world. The program focuses on how a state can effectively combat terrorism but still adhere to the fundamental values of a democratic society.

"We take a grand strategy approach in which the tools of national power and international cooperation should be used together by partner countries," Harmon said.

The PTSS faculty works to increase participant knowledge about



Participants in the Marshall Center's Program in Terrorism and Security Studies look at some of the weapons and gear used by the French Intervention Group of the National Gendarmerie, GIGN, July 22, while visiting Satory Base, Versailles, during their field study to Paris, France.

terrorism and emphasize methods of counterterrorism. Other topics include public diplomacy, law enforcement, countering terrorist finance and the use of military force.

"We try to capture current trends, and have recently held panels focusing on the problems of cyber- and suicide terrorism," Dr. Harmon said. "We are trying to be proactive, so we have a model on the vulnerabilities of

terrorist groups – so participants are urged to think on how to penetrate and dismantle or weaken active terrorist groups."

The course included lectures by noted counterterrorism professionals such as Dr. Martha Crenshaw from Stanford University. Course participants are put into smaller seminar groups for moderated discussions about lecture topics and

assigned readings.

Dr. Harmon said current and past faculty members are contributing to a book for the course, "Toward a Grand Strategy Against Terrorism," which is to be published in the fall of 2009.

Pratt says the strengths of the program are the "world-class faculty," a strong curriculum and its students.

"The biggest strength is the students themselves," Pratt said.

Garrison preps for September's Alpine tournaments

by JOHN REESE
USAG Garmisch PAO

Four sporting events taking place in September at Kean's Lodge on Kramer Mountain are now accepting registration. Three events were scheduled and one is a make-up event due to rain in July. Events include a German-American shooting competition, a mountain bike race, a cross country race for ID cardholders and a German-American golf tournament.

The Bundeswehr will be defending their titles for the German-American Friendship Shoot at Kean's Lodge Sept. 5.

The competition uses high powered pellet rifles in a 25 meter elimination round and a 50 meter final round.

Last year the Mittenwald soldiers and German civilians dominated the finals out of a field of more than 100 participants, with Oberstabsfeldwebel (Command Sgt. Maj.) Wolfgang Badstöber taking home the trophy, Bundeswehr reservist

Oberleutnant (1st Lt) Tom Krappman taking second place and local national civilian driver Andi Viessmann taking third place.

"The winner's trophy is the 50 meter wooden target for the final round," said Andrea Winter, Host Nation Liaison and event organizer. "It ends up full of holes, but it's still a beautiful, hand-painted piece of art."

In addition to the shooting competition, the garrison hosts a barbecue with an atmosphere reminiscent of a fest, added Winter.

The "Fat Tire Spectacular" Mountain Bike Race takes place Saturday, Sept. 12.

The Fat Tire race, possibly the oldest mountain bike race in Germany, was initiated by Soldiers stationed in Garmisch who introduced mountain biking to the Alpine sport-minded Bavarians. The race was started by the Armed Forces Recreation Center's Outdoor Recreation sports staff to race the bikes they'd brought over from the States.

"This race was in Garmisch before mountain bikes were sold in Germany," said Drew Benson,

Garmisch Outdoor Recreation "Alpine Expert" and race organizer. "The first year they ran the Fat Tire they had to chase cows off of the course the morning of the race. We still encounter the occasional cow. That's why cows always appear in the custom logo artwork!"

The bike race is a part of the U.S. forces championship series. Registration for all age and gender categories for the Fat Tire will be at the lodge Friday, Sept. 11 from 4:30-8 p.m. and the morning of the race from 7:30-9:30 a.m. The race begins at 10 a.m.

Sunday, Sept. 13, bikes will be traded for running shoes as Mueller Fitness Center hosts the second Cross Country Challenge. The course is essentially the same as the mountain bike race according to Mueller fitness trainer Ewa Denikiewicz.

"This is a run in rugged terrain with beautiful views of the Zugspitze and Garmisch," said Denikiewicz. "Participants will get their race bibs at the start line at 9 a.m. The race begins at 10 a.m."

Finally, the garrison's rescheduled 32nd Annual Commander's Cup Golf Tournament takes place at the FMWR Alpental Golf Course Sept. 26.

The popular German-American tournament was scrubbed July 18 after high winds and rain temporarily turned the greens into a marsh.

Sixty or more golfers are expected to participate in the tournament on one of Germany's oldest golf courses.

In a nod to the Professional Golf Association's tradition of presenting a green jacket to the Masters winner, a green and white striped jacket with the names of past winners embroidered on the front is presented as a perpetual trophy; originally the jacket, which looks more like something from a barbershop quartet than the PGA was intended as a joke, but it has become a serious prize to the dedicated duffers.

Registration forms will be available online at www.garmisch.army.mil. For other questions, contact the USAG Garmisch Public Affairs Office at DSN 440-3701.

COMMUNITY SNAPSHTOS



Photo by John Reese

Above: From left, Lt. Gen. Robert Wilson, Commanding General, IMCOM, Command Sgt. Maj. William Berrios, USAG Grafenwoehr, and USAG Garmisch Garrison Manager Karin H. Santos react to a humorous story told by Command Sgt. Maj. John M. Gaines, IMCOM, during a July 23 tour of the Garmisch facilities. "Lt. Gen. Wilson noted the garrison team spirit at work. He was clearly impressed and expressed his desire to return for a future vacation," said Santos.



Garmisch-Partenkirchen began a cycle of fest weeks beginning with the Garmisch parade through the downtown pedestrian zone July 26. After a week of revelry in Garmisch and then a week off, Partenkirchen took over with their own parade and fest August 8-17. Featured events included stone-lifting and lumberjack competitions.

Photo by John Reese

Garrison dining facility wins top honors

by KRISTIN BRADLEY

Bavarian News

The staff at the U.S. Army Garrison Hohenfels dining facility can confidently say their DFAC is one of the best in Europe after being named the small garrison winner in the Installation Management Command-Europe and U.S. Army Europe/7th Army 2009 Philip A. Connelly Award competition.

According to Army publications, the objective of the Philip A. Connelly Awards Program, which is governed by the Army Food Service Program and cosponsored by the International Food Service Executives Association, is to "improve the professionalism of food service personnel, thus providing the best quality food service to supported Soldier diners ... (and) provide recognition for excellence in the preparation and serving of food in Army troop dining facilities."

Representatives from IMCOM-E and USAREUR evaluated Europe's DFACs and assigned them points based on a number of factors such as their training program, administration, food preparation and quality, command support and more, said Robert Shamberger, acting food program manager for IMCOM-E.

This year Hohenfels ranked first among garrisons that serve 399 people per meal or less, earning them the top spot.

Robert Janey, DFAC manager, said he was not surprised by their first place finish.

"Between the local national and



Photo by Troy Darr

Left to right: Andreas Schmidt gathers fruit to place in the salad bar while Manfred Muller and Robert Janey, garrison dining facility manager, review a recipe card for lemon baked fish. The U.S. Army Garrison Hohenfels DFAC was recently named the small garrison winner in the Installation Management Command-Europe and U.S. Army Europe/7th Army 2009 Philip A. Connelly Award competition.

U.S. employees we have a wealth of experience," said Janey. "I would say 90 percent of our local national employees come from German culinary arts schools. Most of the Americans are retired military. They

all have a wealth of knowledge and good ideas, so it was easy for me to take that and focus their ideas in one direction."

After winning at the IMCOM level, Janey and his crew's next focus

will be the Department of the Army level of competition.

Though they have already begun preparing for when representatives from DA will travel to Hohenfels in the fall to inspect the facility

again, Janey said the preparations are nothing new.

"It's everything we do daily," he said.

Work leader Manuel Torres, a retired service member that has been with the USAG Hohenfels DFAC for almost 15 years, said it was the everyday training that made the staff confident they would win the IMCOM award.

"We've got everything together. We're not just training for the Connelly awards, we're training every day. It's the quality of food: we make sure we follow the recipe cards and are up to standards. We put in more than 100 percent every day. We care about the Soldiers, that's the main part," said Torres.

Janey said though he knows his team is appreciated at Hohenfels, it is nice to be recognized on a larger stage.

"The local command and community always acknowledge the job we do, but (it is nice) to realize our talent is not just great here but great across the spectrum of food service."

"It's an extreme honor to even reach the DA level. To me that says the facility and employees are not just the best in our opinion, but are actually among the best worldwide," said Janey.

Both Janey and Torres said they are just as confident about winning the DA competition as they were about winning at the IMCOM level.

"If the bookmakers were putting odds on us in Vegas, I'd bet on us," said Janey.

Young newcomers discover ins, outs of community

Story and photo by

KRISTIN BRADLEY

Bavarian News

When a military family relocates to a new assignment, each member faces unique challenges as they get to know their new community.

When a military family relocates to Europe, there can be even more challenges to overcome.

For children of Soldiers new to U.S. Army Garrison Hohenfels, Army Community Service operates an annual program to help familiarize them with the country, the post and their school while hopefully giving them a head start on the sometimes-difficult task of making friends.

"This is the first introduction to post for most of these kids. We show them things to do both on and off post so they feel more at ease here," said Becky Genge, relocation readiness program manager.

The "Kids and Teens Newcomers Orientation" is broken into three days, one for each of three age groups.

To help familiarize the children to the area, Genge said she strived to make each group's itinerary relevant for their ages. For example, younger children visited the School Age Services building and the Elementary School on their day while teenagers visited the teen center and the High School and their day.

Genge said introducing the children to the services available to them on post is not the only goal of the program.

"I also hope it gives them a face and another kid they know on the first day of school" said Genge, adding that is why the orientation is held each year right before the start of the new school year.

To help the newcomers start building friendships and to give them a child or teenager's perspective of life at Hohenfels, each age group has at least two or three veterans' children or teens who have lived in Hohenfels for a while and can show their new peers the ropes.

"It's fun to meet the new kids," said 11-year-old Morgan Cardon. "I hope it helps them feel more comfortable here."

Elizabeth Blann, also 11, said she wishes she had attended such a program when she was the new kid on the block.

"It would have been nice to know someone, and I wouldn't have had to ask where things were on the first day of school," said Blann.

Patrick Barnett, 11, attended orientation though he already knew about living in Germany from his family's last assignment in Vilseck.

"It's good to come and meet new people. It's nice to have people your age to talk to and ask questions," said Barnett, who even shared some of his own wisdom with his fellow newcomers.

"Being here is really cool because you have the opportunity to travel," he said to a fellow rising sixth grader.

"Who can say that they have been to Germany? Or Hungary, or other places you can go on vacation?" he said.

Griffin Eiser, 11, whose family was last stationed on Hawaii, said he mainly signed up to make new friends.

"There are only two sixth-grade classes, so the chances are pretty good you will know someone from this in one of your classes," said Eiser.

After just two days in Hohenfels, Denise Culbreth, 11, was already learning the ins and outs of post through orientation.

"It is fun and you get a tour of Hohenfels. Now I can help show my parents around."



Children new to the Hohenfels community explore the Arts & Craft Center during their "Kids and Teens Newcomer Orientation" Aug. 11. The annual program is designed to familiarize children with post services as well as give them a head-start on making new friends before the school year begins.

Directors warn that careless use of official vehicles may be costly

by KRISTIN BRADLEY

Bavarian News

Being able to drive a vehicle from the Transportation Motor Pool while on the job instead of a personally owned vehicle is extremely beneficial for many Soldiers and civilians at U.S. Army Garrison Hohenfels.

A person's job may require that he or she drive long distances on official business, haul large equipment or travel the uneven roads in the training area.

Though driving a TMP instead of a POV saves many employees money and time, it is a privilege that for some could lead to some serious headaches.

In Fiscal Year 2008, 39 of the roughly 180 TMPs assigned to USAG Hohenfels were involved in accidents that cost the garrison more than \$25,500.

So far this year 12 vehicles have been involved in accidents leading to more than \$6,000 in total repair costs.

In the grand scheme of a garrison's overall budget these numbers may not seem like a lot, but Ed Jones, garrison director of logistics, said due to a tight budget set to get even tighter, leaders are cracking down on drivers of TMPs that get in accidents.

"We just can't afford it," said Jones. "We have tight budget requirements that are going to get even tighter."

Jones explained after an accident the money to repair the TMP vehicle will first come out of the DOL budget. Then the driver's unit will

be responsible for paying that money back to DOL. The unit then decides if, and how much, the driver is responsible for paying the unit.

If the unit determines the driver was negligent in the accident, they may require the driver forfeit one month of base pay to help cover repair costs. In cases of extreme negligence, the cost to the driver may be even higher.

Jones said no matter what the unit decides to do, the garrison, as operator of all the installation's TMP vehicles,

will initiate some consequences on the driver.

Ultimately, Jones said it is the garrison commander who decides which actions to take, but in general, "If you crack up your vehicle, you're going to go to remedial training and we're going to take your (TMP) license."

The bottom line: though a TMP can be a useful tool to help Soldiers and civilians accomplish their official business, it can also make life difficult for careless drivers.

Team Blackfoot treats Afghan locals, provides healthcare to remote villages

Story and photo by

Spc. ELISEBET FREEBURG
JSC-A PAO

In a garrison environment, medics operate sick-call clinics for ill or injured Soldiers. On the frontlines, medics stabilize severely-wounded troops long enough for a medical evacuation to a field hospital. At Forward Operating Base Baylough, two medics of the 1st Battalion, 4th Infantry Regiment use their medical skills for not only their fellow Soldiers but also local Afghans.

Although a medic's chief mission is to care for Soldiers, Afghanistan has one of the highest infant and maternal mortality rates in the world with an average life expectancy of only 44 years. Because of this lack of medical care, Spc. Chad E. Brown from Red Oak, Texas, and Spc. Rodrigus I. Purdiman from Cairo, Ill., treat ill or injured locals.

"The impression we try to leave is that America is here to help them in their lives and not to hurt them in any kind of way," said Purdiman.

Assigned to austere FOB Baylough, Purdiman and Brown rotate their duties.

One medic operates the FOB aid station where Soldiers report when feeling ill or when injured while the other medic accompanies Soldiers on daily patrols. Most of the patrols trek through mountainous terrain to local villages within the Deh Chopan district

in Zabul province.

"When we're on patrol we provide aid - humanitarian aid or first aid for citizens," said Brown.

On occasion, villagers approach Soldiers for medical care. Usually, the 1-4 Inf. patrol leader will ask village leaders if anyone is ill or injured. Some patients cannot be treated with supplies from the medic's aid bag.

"The hard part is they don't like to come in, for whatever reason, on their own," said Brown. "But I'll urge them to come into the aid station and let me take care of them a lot better than in the field."

The FOB Baylough aid station contains basic wound-cleaning equipment and bandages, as well as pain medication. The most high-tech equipment in the station is an oxygen tank, said Brown.

Even though helicopter flights to FOB Baylough are often sporadic due to enemy fire, the aid station has never exhausted its medical supplies. Brown monitors supply levels, keeping roughly four weeks ahead.

"We're able to do what we're trained to, with what we have, but there's a lot of improvisation," said Brown.

Burns, especially among children, are the most common injuries that the medics see in the remote villages around FOB Baylough.

Since there is no electricity, villagers use fire for everything from cooking to a light source. The medics have treated burn victims ranging in

**The impression
we try to leave is
that America is
here to help them
in thier live and
not to hurt them in
any kind of way. ‐**

Spc. Rodrigus Purdiman
1st Battalion, 4th Infantry Regiment Medic



Spc. Chad E. Brown, a 1st Battalion, 4th Infantry Regiment combat medic from Red Oak, Texas, examines an infant girl during a dismounted patrol to a village in the Deh Chopan district of Afghanistan's Zabul province.

age from an infant to 10 years old.

The medics have also treated Afghans suffering wounds from exploded ordnances. If the wound is minor, the medics clean it and sew stitches. For more serious injuries, they request a medevac for transportation to the forward surgical team at FOB Lagman or to the Kandahar Airfield hospital. Since Brown was trained to insert chest tubes and sew sutures at a NATO-sponsored medical patrol course in Germany, he should be able to stabilize wounded Soldiers and civilians for up to 72 hours while

waiting for evacuation.

Both medics believe the language barrier makes treating civilians difficult.

Both try to read the body language of their patients, as well as demonstrate through their own body language their purpose to help. They always work with an interpreter, but there is no guarantee of an exact translation, explained Purdiman.

"It's hard to work on the kids, especially the young ones," said Brown. "I try to do the best that I can and not look like the big, bad

American Soldier. I try to look like the good guy."

Soldiers at FOB Baylough occasionally receive care packages, sometimes with toys in them. The medics hand out these toys to comfort an ill or hurting child being treated at the aid station.

As 1-4 Soldiers continue to disrupt insurgent operations in the isolated areas below the surrounding Hindu Kush mountains, Brown and Purdiman carry on their own part by reaching out and helping the local populace through free medical care.

New staff, upcoming renovations improve clinic

by KRISTIN BRADLEY

Bavarian News

So far this year the Hohenfels Health Clinic has implemented many changes and improvements aimed at increasing care and

convenience for beneficiaries.

In January the clinic began web-enabling appointments via www.tricareonline.com.

In April patients gained access to a full-time psychologist and to a psychiatrist one day a week.

Those improvements were just the beginning. Patients have already begun to see some of the many improvements to come, from additional staff to a complete facility overhaul.

All of the initiatives promise to make the clinic more efficient and user-friendly for patients.

To start, an additional primary care manager has been added to the clinic staff, bringing the total to six PCMs, including one physician assistant.

The clinic has also hired three registered nurses to be case managers.

When patients are referred to off-post providers for specialty care, the nurse case managers become the patient's point of contact to help with concerns and ensure continuity of care.

"Patients now have one contact person they know will help and follow through," said Beverly Dickens, nurse case manager, who explained that patient liaisons work with inpatients and the nurse case managers work with outpatients.

The nurse case managers and a new PCM are only a few of the additional staff.

The clinic is now also home to a full-time optometrist, a full-time physical therapist, a full-time family advocacy social worker, and a child psychologist one day a week.

"All this means that access to care for Soldiers, family members and other beneficiaries will increase and improve," said Lt. Col. Derek Cooper, health clinic commander.

Though the clinic has had the necessary equipment since 2005, staffing shortages meant an optometrist was only available at Hohenfels two days a week, prompting many beneficiaries to use off-post providers or make the lengthy trip to Vilseck for eye care.

Though patients will still be referred to other providers for surgery, optometrist Dr. Laura Draper is now seeing patients for primary eye-care full-time.

The clinic has also been making do with circuit riders (visiting care givers) for physical therapy appointments for the past two years.

"We have always had a full-time requirement, now we have a full-time capability," Cooper said about physical therapist Sandra Elliott.

"By having someone here all the time Soldiers reduce their travel time and hopefully can take care of it sooner because they have easier access," said Elliott. "I intend to be very accessible. A personal touch is what I am hoping to reinstate here."

A personal touch is something family advocacy social worker Dennis Stamberger also listed as a goal.

Stamberger has been assigned a dual mission: dealing with domestic abuse situations as well as treating Soldiers with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder.

Stamberger said he has been doing both with military patients for more than 40 years.

He said especially with PTSD, a condition whose diagnosis and treatment has evolved significantly over the past 40 years, his experience has been invaluable and he hopes to use his techniques to help Soldiers at Hohenfels.

"I want people (both families and Soldiers) to know we are here so they will just walk in if they are having a hard time," said Stamberger.

Patients can make an appointment directly with Stamberger or Chris Pongrantz, the clinic's other clinical social worker, by calling the Behavioral Health and Social Work Services office at DSN 466-4582.

In addition to an array of staffing changes, the clinic has also submitted and been approved to undergo structural improvement starting in October.

According to Cooper, a multi-million dollar complete renovation of the clinic, expected to take nine months, will result in "better space utilization and a better facility."

The plans include two patient rooms for each physician, a separate space for physical therapy and additional spaces in the parking lot.

For more coverage on the renovations be sure to check out upcoming issues of the Bavarian News.



Courtesy photo

New staff at the U.S. Army Garrison Hohenfels health clinic, including a full time optometrist, a full-time physical therapist and a full-time family advocacy social worker, will provide increased convenience and care for patients.

What's Happening

Grafenwoehr/ Vilseck Briefs

Army Family Covenant Survey

Participate in the AFC survey though Sept. 15. The online survey is being held to evaluate the effectiveness of the AFC.

Soldiers, family members and civilians are encouraged to evaluate their satisfaction with all aspects of Covenant-related programs and services.

The survey only takes a few minutes and can be accessed from the garrison web site at www.grafenwoehr.army.mil.

Women's Equality Day

Join the celebration tomorrow from 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. at Bldg. 103, Performing and Arts Center in Graf. For more, call DSN 475-8038.

Wheelchair athlete visit

Four-time gold medalist Dr. Rory Cooper will be in Vilseck Friday at 2 p.m. at the Rose Barracks Memorial Fitness Center in Vilseck.

For more info call DSN 475-1740.

Fuel system outage

Due to a ration card fuel system outage, customers will be unable to purchase fuel at either ESSO or AAFES, and fuel cards cannot be issued or renewed starting Saturday starting at 10 p.m. until Sunday at 6 a.m.

BOSS Car Show

The 7th annual BOSS car show will be held Saturday at the Grafenwoehr AAFES PX parking lot.

Registration starts at 9 a.m., judging begins at noon. For more, call DSN 475-8822

Soccer Camp

The USYS Europe Oberpfalz District will be holding a two-day soccer camp Aug. 29-30 in Grafenwoehr.

Professional coaches from England will offer two sessions a day for children aged 8-18. Cost is based on the number of attendees.

For more, email jace2e@hotmail.com or wbidinger@yahoo.com.

Operation Rising Star

Come to the Grafenwoehr Performing Arts Center Sept. 11 and 18 for a chance to win the ultimate recording music experience.

Singers must be Active Duty, Reserve, National Guard or military family members 18 and older. Doors open at 6 p.m. Show starts at 7 p.m.

For more, call DSN 475-6426, CIV 09641-83-6426 or visit www.oprising-star.com.

CFC Training

It is time for CFC to begin. A training session for all CFC unit representatives will be held Sept. 16 at 10 a.m. in Grafenwoehr, Bldg. 244, Room 219. Training will last approximately 1.5 hours.

For more, call DSN 475-8432 or email christine.nunez@eur.army.mil.

Legal education program

The Judge Advocate General's Corps is now accepting applications for the Army's Funded Legal Education Program.

Under this program, the Army projects sending up to 25 active duty commissioned officers to law school at government expense if funding permits.

For more, visit www.jagcnet.army.mil or call DSN 475-8446.

Netzaberg Shoppette

The Netzaberg Shoppette will holds its grand opening Sept. 24 at 9 a.m.

The facility will have a four-pump fuel island, a fully functional Snack Ave with drink station and complete Java Coffee program, a selection of DVDs to rent and books and magazines to purchase, a walk-in cooler for cold beverages, and a Class Six section.

Estate claims

Anyone having claims on or obligations to the estate of Larry E. Candler of LFOA-Europe should contact the following summary court martial officer: Capt. Geerati Choosang at DSN 474-2485 or email geerati.choosang@eur.army.mil.

Free and reduced lunch

All free and reduced school lunch applications, including new applications for this school year and re-applications for the upcoming school year, will be processed through CYS Central Registration offices on Rose Barracks (Vilseck) Building 224, or Grafenwoehr Building 244. For more, email cysinfo@eur.army.mil.

AL-ANON

AL-ANON meets every Thursday at 7 p.m. at Counseling Center (downstairs), Building 206 (near CDS) in Grafenwoehr.

The only requirement for membership is that there is an alcohol or drug problem with a relative or friend. For more, call CIV 0171-983-9151.

AAFES Now Hiring

Stop by your local human resources

office or go on-line at www.aafes.com to apply.

Craft classes

The Arts & Crafts at the Heart & Home Craft Shop are offering the following classes. For more, call DSN 475-6101, CIV 09641-83-6101.

- Aug. 22: Earring Class, noon-2 p.m.
- Aug. 29: Bracelet Class, noon-2 p.m.
- Ongoing: Framing Classes are held second Wednesday each month from 6-9 p.m. and the fourth Saturday of the month from 9 a.m. to noon. Cost is \$35 plus supplies. Please sign-up in advance.
- Ongoing: Block of the Month Quilt meets the last Friday of every month until the quilt is completed, 9-11 a.m.

Friendship walk

There will be a friendship walk Aug. 29 from 10 a.m. to noon at the Grafenwoehr fitness center to promote special needs awareness.

The one mile walk will be followed by refreshments and activities for kids. Everyone in the community is invited. For more, call DSN 476-3221, CIV 09662-83-3221.

Garmisch Briefs

Walking tour

Join us for a Garmisch historic walking tour August 24 at 6 p.m., cost \$7. This is your chance to find out a little about the town that you are living in.

For more, call DSN 440-2638, CIV 08821-750-2638.

Venice get-away

Take a weekend tour to Venice Aug. 28-30, cost \$290 (includes transportation to Vicenza, Venice, and Verona and two overnights there as well as guided tours of two cities!)

Plan to bring about 140-160 Euro to cover museum entrances, food, public transportation, some souvenirs, etc.

For more, call DSN 440-2638, CIV 08821-750-2638.

Labor Day trips

Travel to Prague and Pilzen Sept. 4-7, cost \$370 (covers three overnights in the hotel and the transportation there and back as well as the admissions to the brewery plant.) A minimum of 12 people are required before the trip can take place.

For more, call DSN 440-2638, CIV 08821-750-2638.

"Stomp"

Enjoy a very athletic theater piece in Munich at the Circus Krone Sept. 29-Oct. 4, cost 29-59 Euro (children under the ages of 16 half price.)

For more, call DSN 440-2638, CIV 08821-750-2638.

"Ben Hur" live

See "Ben Hur" on stage October 30-31, cost 120 Euro, at the Olympic Hall in Munich includes the recreation of the famous chariot race.

For more, call DSN 440-2638, CIV 08821-750-2638.

Hohenfels Briefs

Hallo Hohenfels

This is the place to be Aug. 19-21 if you're new to post. Completely redesigned into a three-day event packed with the exact information you need upon arrival.

Register by phone or in person. Hallo Hohenfels convenes at ACS, Bldg 10 starting at 8:30 a.m. Call ACS at DSN 466-4860 for more.

Buying a Home in the States?

Come to a workshop today at 5 p.m. at the ACS to learn how much home you can afford and exactly how the VA Home Loan Guarantee Program works.

You will also get tips on: finding a realtor, types of mortgages, costs, researching the repo market, insurance, finding a home, record keeping and putting it all together. For more, Call ACS at DSN 466-4860.

Women's Equality Day

The Women's Equality Day obser-

vance will take place tomorrow from 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the Garrison Dining facility.

The guest speaker for the event will be Sgt. Maj. Carleen Williams from the Grafenwoehr JAG office.

Hohenfels Youth Center

• Aug. 23-25: Keystone Camping Trip. Cost is \$25.

• Aug. 26: Palm Beach. Cost is 15 Euros.

• Aug. 27: Shopping at Ramstein and K-Town. Cost is free.

• Aug. 29: Back to School Barbecue for middle school and high school. Cost is free.

The Youth Center is offering lower prices on some of the summer trips. For more information call the Hohenfels Youth Center at DSN 466-4492.

Dental assistant training

The dental clinics are seeking responsible, mature and reliable adults who will be dedicated to the training and to the vocation.

The 62 hours of classroom training will take place in Vilseck. All participants must pass the final exam, or they will not be allowed to continue with the program.

Each participant will complete the required 300 hours of chair-side training in his or her home clinic.

The total of 362 hours must be completed within six months of the start date of the program.

All applications are due to the Red Cross by Aug. 21. For more, call DSN 466-1760.

The combined CPR and first aid class Aug. 22 in Hohenfels will provide attendees with the knowledge and skills necessary to help sustain life in an emergency.

Cost is \$30 for first aid, \$35 for CPR or \$40 for both, and must be paid in order to reserve a slot. Each one-day class runs from 8 a.m.-5 p.m. in the ACS conference room. For more, call DSN 466-1760.

Bamberg and brewery tour

The UNESCO world cultural heritage town of Bamberg offers its visitors not only culinary specialties like Original Schlenkerla Smokebeer, but also a wide range of cultural highlights.

After an exciting day of touring and sightseeing, sit down and enjoy one of the best beers in Bavaria at the monastery.

The bus will depart Hohenfels from ODR, Bldg. H15, Saturday at 7 a.m. and return to Hohenfels around 9 p.m. Cost is \$45 per person. Call DSN 466-2060 for more.

Retiree Appreciation Day

The Hohenfels health clinic will host Retiree Appreciation Day August 24.

All retirees are welcome for walk-in services from 8 a.m. to noon. Call DSN 466-3403 for more information.

Education center testing

The AFCT will be offered Aug. 26 at 9 a.m. You must have a DA Form 4187 signed by the commander.

The ACT will be given Sept. 2 at 8:30 a.m. The initial test is free for the military. This test usually takes six to eight weeks to get the results back.

For more, call the testing office Monday through Thursday at DSN 466-4040

or e-mail Barbara.jensen@eur.army.mil.

Elementary School news

The Hohenfels Elementary School will host the meet, greet and treat Aug. 28 from 2:30-4 p.m.

The event will begin with the opening remarks by the administration at 2:30 p.m. at the Post Theater.

Munich and Dachau tour

The bus will depart Hohenfels from ODR, Bldg. H15, Aug. 29 at 9 a.m. and return to Hohenfels around 2 a.m.

Cost is \$40 per person. Call DSN 466-2060 for more.

Swimming skill clinic

The Hohenfels Hurricanes swim team will host a competitive swimming skill clinic open to all swimmers Aug. 29.

Eligible swimmers must be water safe and able to propel themselves independently through the water, not less than 10 meters. The clinic will be held from 9 a.m. to noon at the Neumarkt Freibad.

For more information, e-mail swim-hohenfels@aol.com.

School supply and coat drive

The Military Council of Catholic Women and Protestant Women of the Chapel will be collecting school supplies to send to children in Afghanistan until Aug. 30.

MCCW will also collect coats to send to the people of Afghanistan until Sept. 2. Take all donations to the chapels. For more, email gregnatalie4@aol.com.

ASE testing

The deadline to register for ASE Testing, which takes place Nov. 5, 10 and 12, is Sept. 2.

DANTES funds three \$27 exams per test cycle for Active Duty, Reserve and Guard. It is no longer required for personnel to be in a related MOS to be eligible to receive funded tests. Do not register online.

For more, DSN 466-4040 or e-mail Barbara.jensen@eur.army.mil.

Sept. 11 memorial service

A Sept. 11 memorial service is scheduled for 2:30-3:30 p.m. at the Nainhof Chapel.

Holiday Bazaar

The Hohenfels Community and Spouses Club and FMWR will host the first Holiday Bazaar of the 2009 season at the Community Activity Center and Post Gym Sept. 10-12.

Community Spotlight

What's Happening

Ansbach Briefs

Ansbach showcase

The Ansbach Community Showcase takes place Aug. 29 from 10 a.m.-2 p.m. at the Katterbach Fitness Center.

The showcase puts all of the community's services, agencies, clubs and private organizations on display with staff members ready to answer people's questions and let them know what they have to offer. Certain agencies from the local German area will be on hand, too.

For more, call DSN 467-2883, CIV 09802-83-2883.

School lunch program

Free and reduced-price school lunch program applications are available now for the next school year.

The applications can be picked up at the ACS, community schools or from the school liaison officer in Bldg. 5817 on Katterbach across from the community mail room.

Applicants should complete the form, and bring it with a copy of the sponsor's orders and most recent leave and earnings statement to ACS.

Take a hike

Outdoor recreation hosts an Alpine hiking trip on its King Ludwig Trek Aug. 29-30 with lodging in a rustic mountain cabin. Cost for the trip is \$79.

For more, call DSN 467-3225, CIV 09802-83-3225.

Dodgeball challenge

Ansbach hosts its second annual Dodgeball Challenge Aug. 21 at the Katterbach Fitness Center. Pre-registration begins at 8 a.m. and the tournament starts at 9 a.m.

Teams must have at least five people. Sign up at either the Katterbach or Storck Fitness centers.

For more, call DSN 467-2771, CIV 09802-83-2771, or DSN 467-4582, CIV 09841-83-4582.

Personnel's new hours

The Ansbach Military Personnel Division has new operating hours.

ID card section: Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays open 8 a.m.-4 p.m. with last customer sign in at 3:45 p.m. Wednesdays are for appointments only.

Installation Access System: Mondays-Fridays from 8 a.m. to noon and 1-4 p.m.

Passport section: Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursdays from 8 a.m.-3:45 p.m. Fridays the office is closed from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. for training and open from 1-4 p.m. Wednesdays are for appointments only.

Reassignment actions: Mondays-Thursdays from 8 a.m. to noon and 1-4

p.m. Fridays the office is closed from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. for training and open 1-4 p.m. Wednesdays are for appointments only.

For more, call DSN 467-2630, CIV 09802-83-2630.

Illesheim Elementary news

The Illesheim Elementary School staff reminds parents that ongoing student registration is daily from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

In other school news:

- The new family orientation day is Aug. 25 at 9 a.m. at the school.

- Bus passes will be issued at the school for all bus riders (high school and elementary school) Aug. 20, 24, 25, and 26, from 9 a.m. to noon and 1 p.m. to 3 p.m.

- Class lists will be posted Aug. 28 at 3 p.m. The Parent, Teacher, Student Association sponsors a back to school cookout and membership drive in conjunction with class lists posting.

Learn German

Katterbach Army community Service hosts German classes for beginners and also for those who know the basics throughout the year.

German 1 is scheduled for Oct. 6, 7, 13, 14, 20 and 21. German 2 is scheduled for Sept. 8, 9, 15, 16, 22 and 23. All classes take place from noon to 1 p.m. at Katterbach ACS.

For more, call DSN 467-2883, CIV 09802-83-2883.

Instructors wanted

Ansbach's Schools of Knowledge, Inspiration, Exploration and Skills Unlimited is looking for people willing to share their expertise with community youth in a variety of skills—and earn money in the process.

Child, Youth and Schools Services' SKIES Unlimited program needs instructors in culinary arts, art, hip-hop dance, voice and German language.

For more, call DSN 468-7303, CIV 0981-183-303.

Now hiring

The Ansbach Spouses and Civilians Club Thrift Store is hiring for various positions. People interested should stop by the store on Katterbach for an application.

The Ansbach Thrift Store is open Tuesdays and Wednesdays from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. and Thursdays from noon to 6 p.m.

For more, call CIV 0176-631-07391.

Foster parents needed

The Army Community Service Family Advocacy Program is looking for interested families to become emergency foster care providers. The EPC program provides substitute family care for children over a planned period of time when children's own parents are unwilling or unable to care for them.

If you are interested, please call DSN 467-2146, CIV 09802-83-2146.

Self help Saturdays

The Self Help stores at Storck and Katterbach are open Saturdays during a test period now through Aug. 30. Store hours are 7:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. Tuesdays through Saturdays. The stores are closed on Mondays.

For more, call DSN 467-3408, CIV 09802-83-3408.

Clinic offers physicals

The Illesheim Health Clinic offers health assessments and sports physicals Mondays-Thursdays now through Aug. 31. Spots are limited, so people should call and arrange for an appointment as soon as possible. Walk-ins are not accepted.

People taking advantage of the physicals should bring current shot records, and fill out an Infant, Child and Adolescent Health Assessment Form before the appointment.

For more, call DSN 467-4512, CIV 09841-83-4512.

Schweinfurt Briefs

Women's equality walk

Celebrate women's equality day by participating in the two-mile fun walk starting at the Askren commissary Aug. 26 at 9 a.m. Sponsored by Equal Employment Opportunity and Ledward Library, the first 100 participants receive a free T-shirt.

Video-gamers' club

Join Ledward Library's video-gamers' club to compete, hang out, play new games, or trade your old ones.

The next gathering is tomorrow at the library at 1 p.m. For more information, call CIV 09721-96-1740.

Schools begin

Schweinfurt Elementary, Middle, and Bamberg High School all resume session with students beginning Aug. 31.

Remember to register and vaccinate your children before that time.

Flea market bargains

Come shop for bargains at the tailgate flea market Saturday in the motor park across from Ledward's Main Exchange parking lot. Sales begin at 10 a.m. and go until 4 p.m.

Dodgeball tournament

Registration is now open for the adult dodgeball tournament at Finney Fitness Center Aug. 27 at 6 p.m. To register for the unit-level dodgeball league, which starts Sept. 16, call CIV 09721-96-8234.

Kindergarten readiness

Is your child entering kindergarten in September?

If so, it's time to get them prepared by attending the Child, Youth, and School Services kindergarten readiness camp at School Age Services on Askren Manor Aug. 31 through Sept. 2 from 9-11 a.m.

The camp is free for all registered with CYSS. Call for more information, or to sign up, at CIV 09721-96-6090.

Teen magazine needs input

Teens are invited to give their input in the new online community teen magazine "Zines for Teens".

The next meeting is tomorrow at the Ledward Library at 3 p.m. Teens are invited to meet again Sept. 3. The magazine is seeking designers, editors, photographers, and writers. For more, call CIV 09721-96-1740.

Best-selling author visit

Come enjoy an evening of the arts with the best-selling author Gary Shteyngart who is visiting Conn Community Club tonight.

The writing workshop begins at 5:30 p.m. and Shteyngart will read from his best-selling books "The Russian Debutante's Handbook" and "Absurdistan" at 7 p.m.

Enjoy wine, hors d'oeuvres, and a poetry slam session before the workshop. For more, call CIV 09721-96-1740.

Teen swimming

Teens are invited to join Club Beyond

on a trip to the Silvana Schwimmbad today from 2-4 p.m. Call CIV 0175-666-3339 or DSN 354-8620 for a ride.

UMUC registration

University of Maryland University College Europe announces Fall 2009 Session 1 open registration period until Friday.

Book awards of \$100 are available for active-duty enlisted servicemembers, their spouses, and family members, as well as increased scholarship funding which may now be awarded in amounts up to \$1,000.

Students may use these awards in conjunction with additional benefits, such as Military Spouse Career Advancement Accounts, which offers up to \$6,000 in grants for educational funding, as well as military tuition assistance or applicable veterans benefits.

For more, and more, call CIV 09721-96-6383 or CIV 09721-96-6398.

First impression

Learn how to make a positive first impression on job interviews by attending the "First impression employment readiness" ACS class tomorrow from 2-3 p.m.

Topics also include types of interviews, how to dress, and more. Call CIV 09721-96-6933 for more.

Deployment support group

The ACS deployment group meets Wednesdays from 10 a.m. to noon, and is open to all Soldiers and spouses who want to share thoughts, exchange coping strategies, voice concerns, ask questions, and get feedback. For more, call CIV 09721-96-6933.

Interest assessment

Discover a path to success for this year and the future by attending the ACS career and interest assessment workshop Tuesday from 9:30-11 a.m.

Assessment tools will encourage self-direction and action and is great for job-seekers and volunteers. Call to sign up at CIV 09721-96-6933.

Love and logic parent

ACS offers classes for those interested in "Becoming a Love and Logic Parent." Attend the morning class on Tuesday from 9-11 a.m.

An evening class from 5-7 p.m. will be held tonight and Aug. 26 in an ACS classroom. Call DSN 354-6933 to sign up.

Sign up for a night off

Sign up now for the next Parent's Night Out event which will take place Aug. 28 from 6:30-11:30 p.m.



SERVE AGAIN ON YOUR OWN GROUND

The Air Force Reserve is offering part-time opportunities for Medical Professionals with excellent benefits, including choice of home base, education assistance, secure employment and competitive pay.

Choose your home base and you will not be transferred. Receive low cost TRICARE health insurance. Maintain retirement benefits. In most cases you can retain your rank. Specific jobs come with signing bonuses.

Deadline to sign up is Friday.

The cost is \$16 for children ages six weeks to fifth-grade. For more, call DSN 354-6517, CIV 09721-96-6414.

Manage difficult behaviors

ACS invites you to participate in the parenting class "1-2-3 magic: Managing difficult behaviors" Friday from 9-11 a.m.

Limited free child care is available if pre-registered with ACS. Call CIV 09721-96-6933.

Fuel card outage

Due to a scheduled system outage, customers will be unable to purchase fuel at ESSO or AAFES stations from 10 p.m. Saturday to 6 a.m. Sunday.

In addition, fuel cards cannot be issued or renewed during this time.

Treasurer training

Find out the responsibilities of being a treasurer at ACS's class "Treasurer training" at the Yellow Ribbon Room Aug. 27 from 11:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m. Call CIV 09721-96-6933.

New to the military?

Learn how your family readiness group can help you be successful in your new community by attending the ACS class "FRG 101: Intro to the FRG" at the Ledward Yellow Ribbon Room Sept. 1 from 11:30 a.m.-1 p.m. Call CIV 09721-96-6933 to sign up.

Free computer classes

ACS is offering free computer classes from 8:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m. in Ledward building 206 computer lab.

For more, call CIV 09721-96-6933.

- Tomorrow – Internet Explorer 7 & basic web design
- Monday – Basic MS Excel 2007 I
- Tuesday – Basic MS Excel 2007 II
- Aug. 26 – PowerPoint 2007

Socialize at the Lunch Bunch

Join Schweinfurt's lunch bunch tomorrow from 11 a.m.-2 p.m. Sign up for the carpool or call to get directions to the restaurant at CIV 09721-96-6933.

Polizei seek assistance

The local German police are looking for witnesses who might have information about a shooting near the ice skating rink in Schweinfurt late Aug. 10 or early Aug. 11.

Anyone with information, who was near the area during that time, or saw a parked silver Mercedes in the skating rink parking lot, is urged to call CIV 09721-202-1866 or the military police at CIV 09721-96-7000.



BRATISLAVA

THE HISTORIC AND DELIGHTFUL JEWEL OF THE SLOVAK REPUBLIC

Story and photos by
BLAIR BENZ
Bavarian News

Through the centuries, the Slovak Republic's capital city, Bratislava, has been known by many names: Pressburg in German, Pozsony in Hungarian, even a proposal to call it Wilsonovo mesto after American President Woodrow Wilson at the end of World War I.

Nestled between the banks of the Danube, Bratislava is a short 37 miles from Vienna and a world away in terms of history and culture.

Bratislava became the capital of the Kingdom of Hungary in 1536 during the prodigious reign of the Habsburg Monarchy.

Nineteen Austro-Hungarian kings, queens, emperors and empresses convened at the gothic style St. Martin's Cathedral in the Old Town to be crowned from 1536 to 1830.

In the coming decades, Bratislava became the second most industrialized city of the vast Hungarian Empire.

During the Baroque era, the city developed into an artistic center as well as a political and economic hub.

Composer Franz Liszt performed in one of the many Old Town palaces at the age of nine and Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart staged his only Hungarian concert in Bratislava in 1762.

The Neo-Renaissance style Slovak National Theatre opened in 1886 with much fanfare. Holding opera, theatre, and ballet concerts, the theatre's façade is embellished with busts of Goethe, Shakespeare, Liszt, and Mozart.

At the end of WWI, Czech and Slovakia reluctantly formed Czechoslovakia and Bratislava became the official name of the city in 1919. The city sustained heavy bombing from Allied attacks at the end of WWII and eventually fell under Communist rule by 1948.

In 1988, the Bratislava Candle Demonstration was the first large-scale anti-Communist demonstrations of the Velvet Revolution.

Bratislava regained its title as the capital city of the Slovak Republic in 1993.

Despite centuries of political manipulation and turmoil, Bratislava's Old Town retains much of its medieval charm mixed with a thriving modern flair.

The city continues to be the Slovak Republic's political, cultural, and educational center.

A towering piece of the original iron gate that used to surround Old Town now hangs dramatically above the cobbled entrance.

The main square, Hlavné námestie, features the Old Town Hall with its Baroque tower and adjacent buildings dating back to the end of the 13th century.

Used as a municipal building until the middle of the 19th century, the building now houses the City Museum. A cannonball remains embedded in tower wall, a reminder of Napoleon's attempted siege of the city in 1809. The square is surrounded by outdoor cafes and small kiosks selling an assortment of handmade jewelry, needlepoint, and pottery.

Winding through the narrow cobblestone streets, the alley spills onto a wide shopping street lined with high-end boutiques.

At the top of the street sits St. Michael's Gate, the only remaining gate of the fortified medieval wall that once surrounded the city.

Named for the statue of St. Michael adorning the tower's spire, the gate was built in 1300 with restorations to the tower in 1753.

Slovakia joined the European Union in 2004 and adopted the Euro as its currency on January 1, 2009.

Signs of economic prosperity and modernization intermingle with a grand Baroque palaces and winding cobblestone streets.

Bratislava's most whimsical features are the iron and bronze statues that adorn random street corners. A jovial construction worker pops his head out of a

manhole on one corner and a paparazziphoto, poised with his telephoto lens, peers around another corner.

One of the city's most unusual landmarks is the New Bridge or Nový Most. Opened in 1972, the 303 meter asymmetrical suspension bridge spans the Danube.

The bridge's most interesting feature is the flying saucer shaped restaurant and observatory perched high atop the pillars. The panoramic views are some of the most spectacular in the city.

Bratislava fosters a rich visual and performing arts scene. Jazz, Blues, and Classical concerts along the Danube and under St. Michael's Tower take place all summer.

The Summer Shakespeare Festival takes place in July and August on the grounds of Bratislava Castle. Bratislava's Christmas Market boasts crafts from local artisans.

Bratislava may not be as glamorous as Vienna or have the exotic lure of Budapest but this charming jewel on the Danube is not to be missed.

Sitting at a café overlooking the Main Square, watching the local buskers entertain small crowds while children play a game of tag in the square is one of the most delightful and relaxing afternoon activities imaginable.

Clockwise from top right: St. Michael's gate, seen through a corridor of medieval-period homes, shops and cafés is now home to the Museum of Weapons and City Fortifications; The Slovak National Theatre stands as a Baroque emblem of prosperity and theater, opera, and ballet performances run every day except Sunday from September through June; The Nový Most or the New Bridge, opened in 1972, spans the Danube while diners eat at the trendy saucer-shaped restaurant and take in the city views from the observatory at the top; A bronze sculpture of a man resting at the top of a manhole installed into a city street is one example of whimsical art found throughout the city; To celebrate the reconstruction of the Old City in 1997, Bratislava's Magistrate commissioned several sculptures to be placed throughout the city. The statue at the top of the Maximilian fountain stands tall in front of the Old Town Hall. A cannonball from Napoleon's siege of the city is still lodged in the Old Town Hall tower.



Vilseck's U.S. Army Health Clinic welcomes new commander hailed as innovative leader

Story and photo by
JENNIFER WALSH
BMEDDAC PAO

Lt. Col. Glenda Lock assumed command of the U.S. Army Health Clinic, Vilseck from Lt. Col. Elizabeth Hersch Aug. 7 at Rose Barracks.

Hersch, who commanded the clinic since last October, achieved several goals including the medical reintegration of 4,500 Strykers, the addition of behavioral health and preventive medicine staff to the clinic, the opening of a mild traumatic brain injury clinic and the continued management of several construction projects.

Col. Steven Brewster, Bavaria Medical Department Activity commander, emphasized that while the clinic successfully completed several additional tasks, the clinic staff never lost sight of their number one mission.

"Your strong leadership resulted in a patient-focused clinic encounter that raised the Vilseck clinic's overall patient satisfaction to a level exceeding 98 percent," Brewster said.

"Throughout your command time you have never failed to appreciate who we all work for – the Soldiers and Families of the Vilseck military community."

Hersch, who thanked her staff and family for their support, left the incoming clinic commander with some advice.

"I hand off to you a clinic that is in the midst of transformation, both figuratively and literally," Hersch said. "Your buildings will be completed in the coming months, giving you more room to stretch, and your staff is eager to please and is always looking to improve patient care and the work environment. Treasure these people and your time with them. They will become your Bavarian family."

As Hersch leaves command to become the deputy commander of clinical services for BMEDDAC, Lock steps in as the new USAHC Vilseck commander.

"I stand humbly before you ready and eager for the task at hand," Lock said. "I look forward to working with my partners in the network to ensure a medically ready force and to provide

quality, accessible health care to our beneficiaries."

Lock arrives from Fort Huachuca, Ariz., where she was the deputy commander of Nursing and Health Services.

Lock's other military assignments have included executive officer, 3rd Army Medical Department Recruiting Detachment, Fort Knox, Ky.; head nurse, Intensive Care Unit, 14th Combat Support Hospital Chief, Hospital Education, Martin Army Community Hospital, Fort Benning, Ga.; and head nurse, ICU, Operation Enduring Freedom VII, Bagram, Afghanistan.

According to Brewster, Lock's diverse military background makes her a good candidate for command.

"You bring a wealth of experience, drive and talent with you to this command opportunity," Brewster said. "I encourage you to be bold and an innovative leader. The many challenges that lay ahead of us in the near and intermediate future require nothing less."

Lock ended the ceremony with a few words for her Soldiers.



Lt. Col. Glenda Lock (left) passes the guidon during her assumption of command of the U.S. Army Health Clinic, Vilseck Aug. 7 at Rose Barracks.

medicine to the Soldiers, Family members and other beneficiaries in the Vilseck community and to support the medical readiness of the Soldiers of the U.S. Army Garrison Grafenwoehr.

POINT OF VIEW

Benefits of immunizations go beyond a cheeseburger with fries for adults, youth

by **JENNIFER WALSH**
BMEDDAC PAO

As a kid, I hated going to the doctor's office. Not because of the pills the size of lima beans I would have to swallow, or because of the cotton swab they gagged me with to take a throat culture, but because of my terrible fear of shots.

The worst doctor visits were the "routine check-ups".

If I had a high fever or the chicken pox, it was unlikely I would need to be immunized, but an appointment for a "routine check-up" may as well have been an appointment for "the three shots she needs to start school".

Like every caring, loving parent, my mom dragged me kicking and screaming to the immunizations clinic and made sure my shot record was always up-to-date.

Later, she would pretend that I didn't yank my arm away from the provider and would instead reward me for being brave with a cheeseburger and fries. My dad would probably say she was being soft, but I see now that she just wanted me to feel better...



Walsh

and probably to dry her shirt, which would be soaked through with overdramatic alligator tears.

Now, at 25 years old, my days of crying at the immunizations clinic are finished.

At least, I thought they were.

I didn't realize that getting immunized was something I would need to do for the rest of my life. I associate shots with children, not with healthy adults. Healthy adults don't need extra protection against disease, right?

Wrong.

As it turns out, adults need immunizations just as much as children do. Apparently when my mom handed me my tattered, yellow shot record when I left for college, she intended for me to use it for more than just a page in my scrapbook.

Looking back, maybe including handwritten instructions would've been helpful.

Then again, maybe not.

I was perfectly content to live in blissful ignorance, pretending I would never need another immunization.

Much to my dismay, I now work in health care and can no longer avoid my trip to the

immunizations clinic.

To be fair, immunizations are a good thing. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Web site, vaccines have eradicated smallpox, eliminated wild poliovirus in the U.S. and significantly reduced the number of cases of measles, diphtheria, rubella and other diseases.

Not to mention, there are flu vaccines that are available each year.

So I've decided that in honor of National Immunization Awareness Month, I will go to the immunizations clinic and have my shot record officially updated.

I will take charge of my health instead of living in blissful ignorance. I will not yank away from the provider when there's a needle in my arm.

I will reward myself by buying my own cheeseburger and fries and maybe a new pair of shoes.

And this time, I will not cry.

I can only hope my allergies don't start acting up once I get in the exam room. They have a tendency to make my eyes water...

For more information on vaccines, visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Web site at www.cdc.gov, or contact your local health clinic.

Recommended Adult Immunization Schedule

UNITED STATES - 2009

Note: These recommendations must be read with the footnotes containing number of doses, intervals between doses, and other important information.

Figure 1. Recommended adult immunization schedule, by vaccine and age group

VACCINE ▾	AGE GROUP ▾	19–26 years	27–49 years	50–59 years	60–64 years	>65 years
Tetanus, diphtheria, pertussis (Td/Tdap)*		Substitute 1-time dose of Tdap for Td booster; then boost with Td every 10 yrs			Td booster every 10 yrs	
Human papillomavirus (HPV)*		3 doses (females)				
Varicella*			2 doses			
Zoster					1 dose	
Measles, mumps, rubella (MMR)*		1 or 2 doses		1 dose		
Influenza*			1 dose annually			
Pneumococcal (polysaccharide)		1 or 2 doses			1 dose	
Hepatitis A*			2 doses			
Hepatitis B*			3 doses			
Meningococcal*			1 or more doses			

*Covered by the Vaccine Injury Compensation Program.

For all persons in this category who meet the age requirements and who lack evidence of immunity (e.g., lack documentation of vaccination or have no evidence of prior infection)

Recommended if some other risk factor is present (e.g., on the basis of medical, occupational, lifestyle, or other indications)

No recommendation

The recommendations in this schedule were approved by:
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC)
Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP)
American Academy of Family Physicians (AAFP)
American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG)
American College of Physicians (ACP)

For more, contact BMEDDAC Public Affairs at DSN 476-4605, CIV 09662-83-4605.

CS12465

18: Health fair, 8 a.m. to noon, fitness facility
25: Car seat safety inspection, 1-5 p.m., CYS
29: Truth about energy drinks, 11 a.m.-1:30 p.m., dining facility

2: Physical health, 10 a.m.-2 p.m., PX
16: Health fair, 8 a.m.-4 p.m., health clinic
23: Physical therapy event, noon to 4 p.m., gym
30: Travel health, 10 a.m.-2 p.m., PX

Vilseck
17: Health fair, 10 a.m.-2 p.m., shopping center

Tune in to the AFN Morning Show from 8-9 a.m. each Tuesday in September for important information about your health care!

It is important for adults, like children, to receive the proper immunizations. For more vaccine information, including the immunization schedules for children under the age of 18, visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Web site, www.cdc.gov or contact your local Army health clinic.



Report all clinically significant postvaccination reactions to the Vaccine Adverse Event Reporting System (VAERS). Reporting forms and instructions on filing a VAERS report are available at www.vaers.hrsa.gov or by telephone, 800-822-7967. Information on how to file a Vaccine Injury Compensation Program claim is available at www.hrsa.gov/vaccinecompensation or by telephone, 800-338-2382. To file a claim for vaccine injury, contact the U.S. Court of Federal Claims, 717 Madison Place, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20005; telephone, 202-357-6400.

Additional information about the vaccines in this schedule, extent of available data, and contraindications for vaccination is also available at www.cdc.gov/vaccines or from the CDC-INFO Contact Center at 800-CDC-INFO (800-332-4636) in English and Spanish, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Use of trade names and commercial sources is for identification only and does not imply endorsement by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

Iraqi soldiers turn American procedures into practice, improve checkpoint security

Story and photo by

Capt. STEPHEN C. SHORT
172nd Infantry Brigade

Soldiers of the 172nd Infantry Brigade, Blackhawks are standing back as Iraqi Soldiers step up and do exactly what they have learned from their American mentors in regards to planning and preparation for going on patrol following the June 30 date for withdrawal of Coalition Forces from Iraqi cities.

The Iraqi Army and Soldiers from the 172nd Infantry Brigade are collocated at Forward Operating Base Echo in Diwaniya Province, Iraq, which lends many opportunities for joint patrol missions and training with Iraqi Security Forces.

Armor Soldiers from C Company, 3rd Bn., 66th Regt. are conducting joint patrols on a regular basis with Iraqi Army soldiers to help improve the capability in conducting a spectrum of missions.

"Our mission when we go out is to partner with the Iraqi Army in order to assist in their professionalization," said 1st Lt. Charles N. Sitz, 3rd Platoon Leader, C Company, 3rd Bn., 66th Armor Regt.

"We have transitioned now that they are leading the missions; they decide where we go and what we will do," added Sitz.

The Soldiers of C Company prepare for their missions just like always, with a thorough briefing of the mission, back briefs from each Soldier and pre-combat inspections, known as PCI's, to ensure weapons and equipment are ready.

Iraqi units discussed their mission planning upon rendezvousing with C Company and then



2nd Lt. Ahmed Hadi Ali, (right), 2nd Platoon Leader, 2nd Company, 4th Iraqi Army Bn. leads from the front as he instructs his Soldiers on proper techniques for conducting a dismounted patrol before his platoon joins U.S. Soldiers on a combat patrol in Diwaniya Province, Iraq. Following the drills, questions and suggestions exchanged between Iraqi and American Soldiers to help improve the procedures and safety for conducting checkpoints and patrols.

arranged their vehicles for a series of drills to ensure everyone in their platoon was ready to conduct a vehicle inspection checkpoint and dismounted patrol.

Training began with direct leadership and direction from the Iraqi platoon leader who issued commands for his soldiers to position their vehicles for conducting a checkpoint. Iraqi non-

commissioned officers established teams and then executed mock checkpoint inspections while U.S. Soldiers observed quietly.

Following the drills, questions and suggestions exchanged between Iraqi and American Soldiers to help improve the procedures and safety for conducting checkpoints and patrols.

"I think I understand what you mean by the distance we need to ensure vehicles stop in time, so we will move the cones back farther," said Sgt. Ali Gareeb Yassim, a towering Iraqi squad leader standing over six feet, six inches.

Ali stood out among the Iraqi soldiers as the older and more experienced leader who assisted the platoon leader in demonstrating and evaluating proper procedures for the platoon.

"I have done this many times and watched the Americans do these procedures; it is the right and safe way to do things. It is dangerous at times since I have personally experienced being shot at by an insurgent before returning fire and going after him," added Ali.

Just before dark, the soldiers of the Iraqi Army, 2nd Platoon mounted their vehicles to depart on patrol as their platoon leader responded to hurried questions from a visiting reporter.

"I do not need to tell you how I feel, because you can see with your eyes that the Americans have come here to tell us the right and good way to help our country," said 2nd Lt. Ahmed Hadi Ali, 2nd Platoon Leader, 2nd Company, 4th Iraqi Army Bn. "I am confident that we can handle the security of our country when the Americans leave, because the Iraqi Army has grown strong and are ready," added Ali, an electrical engineer with a month of combat experience since graduating from the Iraqi Army Academy.

Improvements transform Patrol Base Mahawil

Story and photo by

Pfc. BETHANY L. LITTLE
172nd Infantry Brigade

Amongst the threat of sand storms and extreme heat, the Multi-National Division-South Command Sgt. Maj. Doug L. Julin visited the Soldiers of Charlie Company, 2nd Battalion, 28th Infantry Regiment, Black Lions, at Patrol Base Mahawil, Iraq, Aug. 6.

The visit was to view the improved living conditions and morale of the Soldiers stationed outside of the small town of Mahawil.

"I came to see how conditions have improved since the last time I was here," said Julin. "I have to say, I'm very impressed by the leadership and the spirit of the Soldiers here."

Led by Charlie Company's first sergeant, the tour of the patrol base upgrades began with a tour through the company aid station, headquarters building, dining facility, key leader engagement room and the improved ranges.

"When the company first arrived,

barely any of this was here," said 1st Sgt. Richard A. Mitchell, Charlie Company, 2nd Bn., 28th Inf. Regt., a Jasper, Ind., native. "We've improved force protection, training and personal comfort levels."

The need for the improvements was identified two months ago when the force protection team from MND-S determined the patrol base was austere and offered undesirable living conditions.

Leadership of Charlie Company looked at the suggestions and comments made by the team and began planning the improvements for the patrol base.

Soldiers created supplemental fighting positions that are completely movable to improve force protection on the patrol base. Training facilities were another focus for the company, which included redesigned ranges and new urban terrain training facilities.

"As an infantryman, one can never have enough training, so we created a training house that resembles many of the houses in Iraq. It

has a right hand shooter room, a left hand shooter room and a long narrow hallway that the Soldiers must negotiate," said Mitchell.

Personal comfort was the last aspect the company looked to improve.

"There's a difference between taking care of Soldiers and pampered Soldiers," added Mitchell. "My guys live in tents and air conditioners can only do so much. We received tent foam kits from division and placed the foam on the majority of the tents, which keeps the temperature within the tents about 20 to 25 degrees cooler."

Soldiers are no longer living in austere conditions because of the improvements made to the patrol base, such as the renovated training facilities and updated bathrooms.

"When the Soldiers are supported the way they are here, then they are more likely to do whatever their leadership asks of them," said Julin. "It is evident that the Soldiers are happy and they really want to be here."



1st Sgt. Richard A. Mitchell (left), Charlie Company, 2nd Battalion, 28th Infantry Regiment, explains the Black Lion history and describes the different wars and battles the Black Lions have taken part in to Division Command Sgt. Maj. Doug L. Julin, Multi-National Division-South, 34th Infantry Division, Aug. 6.

U.S. nurses help empower their Iraqi counterpart through training

Story and photo by

Pfc. BETHANY L. LITTLE
172nd Infantry Brigade

In the United States, nurses might be the first people that a patient sees when they go in for a doctor's appointment or go to the hospital. In Iraq, things are a little different.

Walking through the Babil Maternity Hospital, the doctors are the ones writing things down, taking a patient's vital signs and telling the nurses what to do.

"The nurses here aren't allowed to do some of the same things that nurses back in the U.S. are allowed to do," said 1st Lt. Betty Moore, general medical surgeon nurse, 10th Combat Support Hospital.

Some of the differences noticed between Iraqi and American nurses at the medical symposium hosted at the Babil Maternity Hospital held July 26-29 were education, practical skills and critical thinking skills.

"There isn't a standard for their educational requirements. For example, there are some nurses here with a ninth grade education and then there are others who have a two or four year degree from a local university," said Moore.

"Nurses in Iraq have little opportunities to receive foreign education, but we do our best to

learn as much as we can when the opportunity arises," said Neda'a Wahab, midwife and health researcher, Babil Maternity Hospital.

Practical skills vary among Iraqi and American nurses. The role of an American nurse is viewed as the primary person who deals with the patient. In Iraq, nurses follow the orders of the doctors and are limited as to what they can do with patients. Critical thinking skills are another major difference between Iraqi nurses and American nurses.

"A nurse in the U.S. has the initiative that many Iraqi nurses lack or are not allowed to use," said Capt. Sharon Owen, brigade nurse, Charlie Company, 172nd Support Battalion. "For example, if a patient starts to have a problem, a nurse in the U.S. would start to assess the patient immediately. Here, the nurses would go find a doctor because they don't know what to do or aren't allowed to do anything."

To help reduce the number of differences, American nurses are helping by providing Iraqi nurses with additional skills and critical thinking training. "The American nurses are here to help the Iraqi nurses by being a role model for the nursing profession," Owen said. "Things have to change in Iraq, by educating and giving the nurses here some of the knowledge we have, we can start empowering the nursing profession."



Lt. Col. Lori L. Trego, department director, Deployed Combat Casualty Research Team, 10th Combat Support Hospital, teaches Iraqi nurses how to properly resuscitate an infant mannequin at the Babil Maternity Hospital July 28.

Army's first MRAP course in Europe stresses common sense safety skills

Story and photo by

CHRISTIAN MARQUARDT
JMTC Public Affairs Office

Soldiers from the 173rd Airborne Brigade Combat Team were the first European-based troops to attend the 7th Army Joint Multinational Training Command's initial Mine Resistant Ambush Protected Operators Course during the last week of July at the Joint Multinational Readiness Center in Hohenfels, Germany.

The MRAPs are new to the training program in U.S. Army Europe. In July, 40 MaxPro Category 1 MRAPs were shipped from Kuwait to JMTC for use in Mission Rehearsal Exercises and vehicle familiarization for USAREUR Soldiers before they are deployed downrange.

With more than ten tons of armor plating and a full suite of advanced Improvised Explosive Device countermeasures, the U.S. Army believes the MRAP vehicle is the most sophisticated and safe vehicle for combat convoy operations.

Yet, one of the MRAPs most important safety devices is a piece of buckled nylon fabric, known as the Gunner Restraint System.

A flipped MRAP is especially dangerous for Soldiers in the topside gunner position on the truck.

To combat this problem, the MRAP course teaches Soldiers how to wear and use the GRS, a seatbelt harness that attaches to the floor of the MRAP to keep the gunner inside the vehicle in case of a rollover.



A Soldier ground guides a Mine Resistant Ambush Protected vehicle into its parking position during the Army's first MRAP Operators Course conducted in Europe at the Hohenfels Training Area, July 28-31, 2009. The first shipment of 40 MRAPs arrived in Germany in mid-July and will be used by the 7th Army Joint Multinational Training Command to train units at its Grafenwoehr and Hohenfels training areas.

"With this new GRS system, at least it keeps the gunner inside the vehicle," said course instructor Gary Smith. "It keeps him restrained where he's not ejected from the top of the vehicle."

Although Smith said rollovers have been the culprit in most of the casualties associated with the MRAPs,

they are easily avoided by using common sense, understanding the road conditions and knowing what the MRAPs can and can't do.

The 5-day course gave the Soldiers a comprehensive introduction to the MRAP, utilizing both classroom and hands-on instruction.

The Soldiers also were given a

chance to get behind the wheel of the 28,000 pound truck, where they were required to maneuver it through an obstacle course to get a feel for driving the top-heavy vehicle.

"You don't really realize how long and how high off the ground you are," said Cpl. Andrew Therens, a student in the course. "You have to turn slow or

you're afraid you might flip it."

While the MRAPs can operate on straight stretches of paved road at speeds over 65 mph, Soldiers must keep the MRAPs under 20 mph during the course, and even slower when turning to prevent a rollover.

"This truck is extremely tall," said Smith. "You put Soldiers in these trucks that haven't been properly trained and you get a lot of accidents."

"Speed is a real killer in these trucks. Our Soldiers have got to slow them down, and that keeps them safe," said Smith.

"It's not much different than operating your vehicle back home," said Smith. "Basically, this is the same type chassis and cab that commercial truck drivers drive."

The MRAP Operators Course at Hohenfels will certify Soldiers to drive the MRAPs, but it is only the beginning of their training. When they deploy, they will receive an extensive 40-hour course in-theater to build on the basic skills that JMTC teaches back in Germany.

Therens – who survived an IED attack on his up-armored HMMV in Afghanistan during his last deployment – is now more comfortable with the safety features that MRAPs provide to Soldiers and more confident to return downrange after taking the MRAP course.

"Any additional training you get before you go downrange is better," said Therens. "Any extra chance you get to train on the equipment you're going to use is always a plus."

2SCR Wolf Pack recognizes German partners

Story and photo by

Spc. JERRY WILSON
2SCR Public Affairs Office

The collaboration between 3rd Squadron of the 2nd Stryker Cavalry Regiment and the German 104th Panzer Battalion was formalized Sunday June 19 during an official ceremony in Pfreimd, Germany.

Soldiers from both units, as well as local civilians watched as Lt. Col. André M. Abed, the Commander of the 104th Panzer Battalion and Lt. Col. Bryan Denny, the 3rd Squadron, 2SCR Commander exchanged partnership certificates further cementing the bonds between the two allies.

"At today's visitors day we officially take over the partnership with our American comrades," Abed said during his opening remarks. "The battalion has been waiting a long time for this moment. I am very excited and have great respect for this step," he said. "We are looking forward to common training experiences and the continued sharing of mission-related advances."

The sharing of common experiences seemed to be what most Panzer and Wolf Pack Soldiers were looking

forward to the most.

"I feel honored today," said Capt. Ulrich Humpert, operations officer for the 104th said. "In my professional experience, I have had a lot of contact with Americans and have trained in the United States," he continued.

"I remember the camaraderie, professionalism and all the good times we shared together. It should be a normal routine for American and German units to work closely together," Wolf Pack Commander Lt. Col Denny expressed what a unique experience these partnerships are.

"This is a once in a lifetime experience for Soldiers serving in Europe," he said. "It is a great opportunity to officially partner with a foreign army."

"In our case we are very lucky to have the 104th Panzer Battalion as our partners," he said. "We will share a lot of ground together between Grafenwoehr and Hohenfels within the next year."

Family interaction was a big part of the day as spouses and children of 3rd Squadron Troopers spent the day alongside the families of Panzer



Lt. Col. Bryan Denny, Commander of 3rd Squadron 2nd Stryker Cavalry Regiment (right), presents Lt. Col. André M. Abed, Commander of the 104th Panzer Battalion his official Cavalry Stetson during the official partnership ceremony July 19th.

soldiers exploring the variety of exhibits on display.

Denny said that getting the spouses

and kids from both units to interact is a vital part of the partnership. "Wolf Pack is a family and the 104th Panzer

Battalion is a family," he said. "We want our families to get to know each other."

Task Force Shield Soldiers receive Schützenschnur

Story and photo by

Pfc. AUDREY GLYNN
172nd Infantry Brigade

Thirty-five Task Force Shield Soldiers received their German Army Schützenschnur shooting award Aug. 5 from Lt. Col. Anton Kussinger, deputy commander, Office of the German Army Representative, Grafenwoehr in a ceremony outside the German Army's training area headquarters.

The shooting competition for the award was organized and conducted by Kussinger's office on July 16 and July 20-21 on Range 123. Seven TF Shield Soldiers won the Golden Schützenschnur, thirteen received the Silver Schützenschnur and fifteen walked away with the German award in bronze.

The event's goal was to bring American and German Soldiers together to train, work, build camaraderie and get to know each other's weapons and qualification requirements for marksman, sharp shooter and expert.

"It was a pleasure for me to arrange this opportunity for our Soldiers to interact with our German counterparts. Our friends in the Bundeswehr conducted this event for us in the most professional manner possible and our Soldiers had a great time qualifying with the German weapons. I could not have asked for a better showing from the Bundeswehr, or our Soldiers," said Staff Sgt. Luis R. Tulier.

Staff Sgt. Roger M. Castillo echoes Tulier's feelings. "Any Soldiers who have the opportunity to participate in

the Schützenschnur competition while in Germany should take advantage of this great cultural experience," he says.

"We were surprised how well the U.S. Soldiers performed on the machine gun," says Sgt. Maj. Billy Sablowski, a German Army weapons' instructor and the organizer of the event. "87 out of 94 participants total received the award which is outstanding. It was truly a great experience for all Soldiers with lots of good conversations in a very relaxed atmosphere. We look forward to continue working together," he adds.

For Sablowski, the event had a very special touch since his son, Sgt. Alex Sablowski, a Soldiers with the German Army's 922d Electronic Warfare Bn. at Donauwörth, was the event's safety officer.



Staff Sgt. Roger M. Castillo (left), Task Force Shield, receives his Golden Schützenschnur award from German Army Lt. Col. Anton Kussinger Aug. 5.

Chapel youth roar with excitement, enthusiasm at Vacation Bible School

Story and photo by

RONALD H. TOLAND JR.
Bavarian News

Vacation Bible School 2009 got off with a splash in Ansbach Aug. 3 with its theme "Crocodile Dock" on Katterbach.

Although the two-week VBS stints for the community are complete, their influence doesn't stop there according to Mark Edwards, the garrison's director of religious education.

"VBS helps unite the community and introduce kids to Christ," he said. "It is an initial introduction to religious activity in a friendly, fun way. We have diverse denominational faith groups in the community and VBS brings all the faith groups together with one thing in mind - unity. It shows they want to connect."

The three-hour program ran daily, one week in Katterbach and one week in Illesheim, with preschool and elementary school-aged children rotating between the various themed message stations.

"It is also an outlet for the families," he said. "With the deployments and all, it gives the spouses a break and gives the kids a positive experience."

Edwards explained that many families relate to it because parents also grew up with VBS.

"They want that same experience for their children and this brings out more kids," he said.

"We had about 200 children per day participating," said Alicia McCready, director of VBS in Katterbach. She felt the number of children this year was phenomenal.

"Getting that many children together for one week, compared to other kids' events we do all year long, is amazing."

"We have outreached to that many children, to talk about God - I have goose bumps," she said.

The message sticks because the program is focused to help children "get it," said Rachel Curry, Katterbach pre-school director for VBS.

"The children talk about it all year long and remember it, even after VBS is over," she said. "It is an experience,

an extension of the community, letting children know why God is important. When somebody else says it and shows them in the way we have been showing them, they experience it, they shine - it is just amazing what they get out of the week."

She added that VBS is effective and keeps the kids motivated and driven because the music keeps them singing and dancing all day long.

"It is fun - the dancing and music," said Natalia Correa, 11. "I like the games and activities."

Correa said she is learning a lot and wants to come back next year, which makes for happy parents, like her mother, who called the program "wonderful."

"She gets more spiritual guidance and that is important to have in your life," said Sonia Correa. "It is a great program with great opportunities - I recommend it."

McCready said the week's activities are designed to be fun and still teach - driving a message home.

"They are having the time of their lives - it's a lot of fun," said McCready. "We are not just sitting here reading to them out of the Bible. They get to experience it in a fun way."

VBS also helps newcomers integrate into the community by networking and finding out many of the things Ansbach has to offer, she added.

"It shows we, as a community, are very inviting people," she said. "I was amazed at the number of new people who do not know what is going on in the community who got involved with VBS."

For some parents, keeping their children actively occupied, even when arriving at new duty stations, is paramount.

"Getting my children involved in the community and church programs when we arrive is important for their stability - the house can wait," said garrison newcomer Michelle Harris who had children in the program.

She added that for her family, the chapel and VBS are pivotal and joining points for them upon arrival, and the staff and members at the chapel have been very supportive.



April Acevedo, Vacation Bible School volunteer, tells pre-school children a story--at the swamp--during the first week of Vacation Bible School at the Katterbach Chapel Aug. 5.

Curry agreed saying the chapel is very welcoming and will do anything to help newcomers.

"When that happens, it is amazing," she said. "We have all been there. When you move to a new community, it is very scary."

The chapel tries to ease that anxiety.

"It's more personal," said Edwards. "We want to try and focus on what the person's needs are and adapt our programs to meet those needs."

Just as important, said McCready, is reaching out and bridging to local neighbors.

"We have a lot of local nationals joining us this week who are neighbors of the American kids," said McCready.

"It brings goodwill," said Edwards. "By us reaching out to them, it makes them feel welcome."

"I come and bring my children to

VBS and church services because of the connection to our faith and our language," said Ana Zahn, a local national whose daughter attended VBS the past five years.

She noted in addition to VBS, the family attends regular church services for the past 11-years at the Katterbach chapel.

"I like the base very much. I like the work the people are doing here and I feel very comfortable," she added.

And her daughter feels the same.

"I am having lots of fun this week and learning a lot - like God is with us," said 8-year-old Esther. "I like coming every year because it makes learning fun so we can be good."

The garrison chaplain believes participation could be even higher and reach more children.

"If that gate were not there, I believe we'd have more Germans,

lined up and involved in the chapel, and come to VBS," said Chaplain Mike Yarman, Ansbach garrison chaplain. "It is a 'vacation' - a great week for the [children]."

Yarman noted that outreach and impact are critical.

"I was not able to go to VBS when I was a kid. I remember to this day, and that impacted me," he said.

"But the impact of this week, I think, will resonate with the kids and they will not forget it. Every penny spent is worth it," Yarman said.

He said that what is invested in the children now and positively impacts their lives, will in turn affect the nation and the world.

Yarman, McCready, Curry, and Edwards all thanked their volunteers, saying the program would not have happened without them in addition to the Self-Help Store for donating many of the supplies.

Engineering intern seeks to leave lasting impact

by **RONALD H. TOLAND JR.**
Bavarian News

When German university student Markus Neumann accepted a four-month garrison student internship, or praktikant, as an energy assistant with the Ansbach Department of Public Works in the utility engineering department this past spring, he was not only planning to receive training, but also to apply that training to immediate practical use for the garrison - a practice dating back three generations for his family.

"I believe renewable energies are the future," said Neumann.

Applying his knowledge of new energy resources, Neumann said he would like to see and maybe even implement solar energy conservation and other renewable energy projects for the garrison.

"It is a moral effect I am trying to imply and pass on or teach to others about renewable energies," he said.

Working part of the week at Ansbach DPW, Neumann studies energy and environmental engineering the rest of the week at Ansbach University, a field his father, Peter Neumann of the Ansbach Works Council, suggested to him.

"I was the first energy conservation specialist the U.S. Army Europe hired in Germany," said



It is a moral effect I am trying to imply and pass on or teach to others about renewable energies.

Markus Neumann, DPW Intern

the elder Neumann, who was hired in 1974 due to the oil crisis in the early '70s. "I worked as a summer hire in 1972, '73 and '74, and really enjoyed working for the U.S. forces just as my father had done since 1945."

He explained that there was no energy engineer study available at that time because energy was not an issue then. But since 1974, it has become an issue, which is why he suggested to his son to become an energy and environmental engineer. "Plus the field has excellent prospects for the future," he added.

With only two classes left to complete his degree, Markus' studies are specifically focused on energy techniques—with a concentration on renewable energies. Applying his knowledge of renewable energies, one of Markus' first projects, a much smaller one, was on a poster.

"I saw a poster in the hall that didn't have much information on it, so it didn't really have a real purpose," he said. "So I decided to do some fact sheets about different renewable energies to make it more interesting."

But he has bigger goals in mind. Some of the larger ongoing and future projects he would like to see happen in the garrison include: photovoltaic (solar) panels for electricity generation on some garrison buildings; radiant heat panels to warm up the hangars more efficiently in Katterbach; solar panels to heat up water in troop billets in Katterbach and more energy projects within the energy assessment of the barracks buildings.

Markus said applying his knowledge to local projects is easy.

"It is not that deep," he said. "I work with my boss to coordinate the organization and

implementation of the projects."

And his ideas are gaining support from the garrison.

"It's good that renewable energies are growing. They have to," said Regina Kranz, garrison utility engineer and energy manager.

Kranz predicted that the next generation will not be able to use coal, oil or natural gas because resources are limited, although no one can give an exact date on when these energy resources will run out.

"Some say 150 years, some say more. It depends on how much energy we use nowadays and in the future," she said. "People all need to play a part in saving energy and using it efficiently. If you watch television or turn on your air conditioner, think of your grandchildren. Maybe you use too much and they will not be able to even switch on a light."

Neumann is optimistic about change and hopes some of the projects he worked on come to fruition.

DPW officials said negotiations are pending technical, financial and logistical considerations.

"I hope I can make a difference with my studies during these tough economic times. And with my last main class project, I can apply the idea to practical use later," he said.

NEED COVERAGE FOR AN EVENT OR HAVE AN IDEA FOR A STORY?

Call the Ansbach Public Affairs office at DSN 468-1600
and tell us about the issues that matter to you.

Army Community Service receives recommendation for accreditation

Story and photo by
SANDRA WILSON
Bavarian News

The Army Family Covenant that was signed in 2007 represents a \$1.4 billion commitment to improve the quality of life for Army Families, according to the AFC document. The U.S. Army Garrison Schweinfurt Army Community Service Center exudes that program expansion to help care for Soldiers and family members.

On July 16, the Installation Management Command Europe ACS accreditation team announced it recommendation for accreditation of Schweinfurt's ACS for not only meeting the standards but for also exceeding them.

"Not every ACS center passes, and not every ACS center passes like we did, which was without a return visit needed," said ACS Director Hal Snyder.

The accreditation team combed over what would seem even the smallest detail during their visit from July 13-16.

"It's an extremely close look at every process and every procedure," Snyder said. "It was an intense experience for us."

Preparation for the visit began nearly a year ago. Staff and even volunteers came in on Saturdays, Sundays and stayed late in the evenings "so that it would never impact our service delivery to the customers during the week," Snyder said. The hope was that preparations would be invisible to the customers who came in seeking regular services and programs.

"Our high level of program delivery was maintained and actually expanded," Snyder said.

Accreditation team visits occur every three

years and are designed to ensure that ACS centers throughout the military are providing a specific level of quality service.

"For anyone that's been part of any successful team, you kinda feel it when you step in," said Travis Reynolds, ACS outreach program coordinator. "When I got here, that's one of the things that I realized."

The evaluation extended beyond the walls of ACS to include other agencies and services that ACS taps into: social work services; Child, Youth, and School Services; military police; Family, Morale, Welfare and Recreation; and more.

Schweinfurt's ACS and partnering agencies passed the test and also received commendations for several benchmark programs that will serve as models worth emulating for other centers across Europe.

"We succeeded at all levels," said Darryl Jones, program manager for financial readiness which was named as a benchmark program. "It didn't matter if my program passed and the rest of the agency didn't - the whole team had to pass. That's what it's all about."

Furthermore, the accreditation team also identified the best practices of Schweinfurt's ACS. Of them was the high adventure booklet, a compilation which offers a variety of resources for community members seeking nearby thrills.

"In addition to providing best service to Soldiers and family members, the systems are also in place to care for them," said Michael Rundell, ACS mobilization and deployment program manager who pursued the creation of the booklet.

Community members can find almost any resource needed inside and out of the military installation at ACS. This is one of the commitments of the Army Family Covenant - to



Bill Carpenter, Army Community Service marketing specialist, and Heather Reagh Knapp, ACS marketing and advertising coordinator, prepare a poster to publicize a Schweinfurt event. Schweinfurt's ACS marketing department received accolades for its work and was identified as one of several benchmark programs for ACS centers across Europe to emulate.

facilitate the highest quality of life.

"I know the exceptional work that the (ACS) staff does. I know that we have always put Soldiers and families first. For everyone to have pulled together and done as well as they did, it's

extremely gratifying," Snyder said about the review of the agency.

"We were successful all along anyway ... We've been doing that and well above that," Reynolds said.

Team effort earns environmental program high marks

by MARK HEETER
Schweinfurt CI Chief

Before the 2009 Environmental Performance Assessment System final report of findings landed at the U.S. Army Garrison Schweinfurt Directorate of Public Works July 20, corrective action was more than 70 percent complete.

In April, a team of experts evaluated twenty aspects of the total Schweinfurt environmental program, from hazardous material storage and drinking water quality to environmental noise and natural resource management.

"Out of the 80 findings that we had, we've already corrected 58 so far," said Lothar Rueckert, chief of the DPW environmental division, proponent for the EPAS, a triennial evaluation.

"... We acted like a team this time. Almost every unit was involved, every unit was informed and up to speed... When you look at the kudos list, they got good information from every unit. In every unit you had people who stood out."

Lothar Rueckert, Environmental Division Chief

This year's EPAS was a success, according to Rueckert, because of cooperation throughout the USAAG Schweinfurt and beyond.

"It's better than last time, because we acted like a team this time. Almost every unit was involved, every unit was informed and up to speed," Rueckert said. "When you look at the kudos list, they got good information from every unit. In every unit you had

people who stood out."

One project involving a local unit, in particular, stood out, according to Rueckert, and garnered a positive finding - a relatively rare EPAS occurrence.

Earlier this year, Soldiers from the 15th Engineer Battalion relocated and built some new biotopes in the Schweinfurt local training area, a project that required detailed

coordination and cooperation among several agencies.

"They did an excellent job, and that comes down to very good coordination between DPW, RTSC (regional training support center), the 15th Engineers, the German government and the forest meister," Rueckert said.

While such cooperation is necessary for the success of the environmental program, it is not

always easy, according to Fraenzi Sommerfeld, compliance manager with the environmental division.

"It's hard work because the units change out, and they have to come out and re-train again," Sommerfeld said. "I'm impressed with the work of the environmental division."

Training Soldiers on the environmental program, and having the opportunity to talk with them, has been a bright spot for Rueckert.

"I found out there are many people who really do care for the environment, that have questions during the inprocessing," he said. "I had Soldiers tell me how they changed their habits when they came here."

"That's a good feeling for the environmental division, if you think you've done something or changed something in a good way for the environment," Sommerfeld said.



Photo by Sandra Wilson

Deanta Doyle, 8, watches as his twin sister, Destiny, adds the finishing touches to their water color painting at Ledward Library July 22. The library hosted the summer reading program for children ages 6 to 11 years old to encourage literacy while school was out of session. As part of the reading program, the children were challenged each Wednesday in July to "Be creative at your library." Participants were introduced to floral design, decorating, museum art and painting. The reading program's grand finale took place July 29.

Commissary scholarship brings out-of-state tuition help to aspiring pharmacist

by SANDRA WILSON
Bavarian News

Through the Scholarships for Military Children Program, nearly \$6.5 million has been given out over the last eight years to military dependents. These scholarships are designed to be awarded to one person every year in each community with a Defense Commissary Agency. Schweinfurt's commissary was no exception, and Victoria McKernan, a Schweinfurt military dependent who will be entering her sophomore year in university, accepted \$1,500 to apply toward school tuition.

"Scholarships for Military Children - which is funded by the vendors and manufacturers who sell groceries to you every day - makes the premier military benefit even more valuable by offering military children a chance to earn a \$1,500 scholarship," said Larry Weathers, store director.

But this award was not given without some work on McKernan's part. She had to submit all the necessary paperwork including an application, school transcripts and an essay. The packet was then sent onto the Fisher House Foundation, as it serves as the program administrator and evaluator.

The application acceptance period each year typically runs from November to February. The essay portion requires all applicants to answer the

same question. This year, dependents were asked what five items they would leave in a time capsule to help future generations better understand life in a military environment.

McKernan and her family were excited to have received the extra financial aid from her award.

"I have to pay out-of-state rates," McKernan said, "and pharmacy school is pretty expensive."

After her first full year at a university in Pennsylvania, she has declared a major in chemistry toward pharmacy school and also decided that college is a great place to be.

McKernan returned to the Schweinfurt community for the summer to work as a summer hire at the front desk of School Age Services and also continues her schooling by taking transferable online classes with University of Maryland University College. Bagging groceries at the commissary is an additional task she takes on during the weekends.

The presentation of the scholarship award to McKernan was the last that Weathers will be conferring in Schweinfurt, as his service here has come to an end.

"The community has been very supportive in my efforts here. I really hate to go. I've seen a lot of improvements since I've been here. Command has been great - couldn't ask for anything better," Weathers said. His new job will take him to Shaw Air Force Base, S.C.

44th Expeditionary Signal Battalion completes ‘awe-inspiring’ relocation

Story and photo by
SANDRA WILSON
Bavarian News

The 44th Expeditionary Signal Battalion has now unfurled its colors in Schweinfurt marking its official relocation from Mannheim in a ceremony at the USAG Schweinfurt Rose Garden July 31.

“Although we’ve been on the ground for a little over a month, it seems like yesterday that the command sergeant major and I arrived to start conducting our day-to-day operations out of the new building,” said Lt. Col. Dwayne Dickens, 44th ESB commander.

The work done to accomplish the move from Mannheim to Schweinfurt has been “awe-inspiring,” said Col. Gerald Miller, 2nd Signal Brigade commander.

According to Miller, the battalion has safely moved 212 pieces of rolling stock, 120 containers, and relocated 105 soldiers and their families the distance of 150 miles between the two cities.

“In all, the battalion has logged tens of thousands of accident-free miles as part of this move. You should all be proud of what you have accomplished in this very short time period,” Miller said.

In addition to the hard work of the battalion’s Soldiers, Dickens attributed the smooth relocation to the contributions of community support around them.

“It’s because of this outstanding garrison support that 44th was able to hit the ground running and never miss a step,” he said.

The 44th ESB brings a long history with it, originating in 1944 with

headquarters in Mannheim for most of its years until now.

It has deployed in support of numerous operations over that last two decades including, most recently, 15 months in Operation Iraqi Freedom 2007-08.

“As the battalion sets down roots here in the community, we’re looking forward to hearing about the positive impact that you will have in the military community and the new bonds of friendship ... in the great city of Schweinfurt,” Miller said.

Lt. Col Dwayne Dickens, 44th Expeditionary Signal Battalion commander (left), and Command Sgt. Maj. Earl Allen unfurl the colors to mark the relocation of 44th ESB to Schweinfurt in a ceremony July 31.



Engineers vie for honors in annual competition

Story and photo by
MARK HEETER
Schweinfurt CI Chief

A blotch of blood seeping through the left leg of his uniform, Spc. Santos Delgado grunted and gasped for a heap of fresh air, trying to

Staff Sgt. Michael Seelow, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 15th Engineer Battalion, low crawls his way to being named the battalion's NCO of the year.



negotiate both his exhaustion and the “over-and-under” obstacle on the Camp Robertson confidence course.

One of four Soldiers and four noncommissioned officers competing for the titles of Soldier and NCO of the Year for the 15th Engineer Battalion, Delgado, had some advice for young Soldiers

who want to succeed.

“Have motivation, confidence, and do what you’re told at all times,” said Delgado, winner of previous Soldier of the Month and Quarter Boards, thus qualifying to vie for the title in the Schweinfurt training area July 21 and 22.

“These are guys that are serious about not only representing their unit in a good light, but also themselves,” said 15th EN BN Command Sgt. Maj. Bradley Houston, who presided over the competition.

“They get tested physically, mentally, both on their tactical warfighting skills but also on the decision-making process.”

Staff Sgt. Michael Seelow, 500th Engineer Company, and Spc. Ryan Panosh, Forward Support Company, were named NCO and Soldier of the Year, respectively, and will represent the battalion in the 18th Engineer Brigade competition in September.

Soldiers and NCOs who participate in such competitions have set themselves apart, according to Houston.

“Guys that compete at these kinds of things are really your self-starters, guys that are serious about distinguishing themselves above their peers,” he said. “So a lot of it comes from

personal pride.”

The event, which began with a physical training test and ended with a board in Class A uniform the following day, included day-and-night land navigation, testing on Army warrior tasks, an eight-mile road march and a stress shoot at the Victory Training Center.

“It is a very hard competition not to be taken lightly and definitely involves a lot of training,” said Spc. Justin Dibler, a mechanic with the 902nd Engineer Company who conducted regular road marches while preparing for the competition.

“They’ve got to do the right thing at all times and, of course, work on their physical and mental toughness. Besides that, train, train, train,” said Sgt. Robert Smith, who, like Delgado, represented Headquarters and Headquarters Company.

Smith, who has been keenly aware of his own personal goals and milestones during his three-plus years in the Army, wants Soldiers to push themselves to see how good they are.

“It’s always been my belief that if you want something bad enough, go for it and take it. They’ve just got to step up to the plate, go for it and grab it,” he said.

GARRISON SNAPS

13-year-old Samantha Gray gets hooked up to a bungee trampoline during the teen summer stress buster at Kessler Field July 30. About 50 teens came out for fun and games, free refreshments served by Soldiers with the Schweinfurt Warrior Transition Unit, educational presentations from community agencies, music and more.



Photo by Mark Heeter



Staff Sgt. Michael Gal, Company D, 1st Battalion, 2nd Infantry Regiment, gives a weapons familiarization class to members of the German army July 29. The event provided an opportunity for the partnership unit, 3.91 Panzer Grenadier Battalion from Bad Salzungen, to train with American Soldiers, at an American range and with American weapons. Nearly once every month, these two units make the time to train together or to conduct a joint ceremony.

Photo by Spc. Jared Ellenwood

Right: Diane Schmidt (right), Webelos den leader with Pack 630, helps Anne Ike put the finishing touches on 10-year-old Godson Ike’s camping gear Aug. 3 before 15 Cub Scouts from Schweinfurt Troop 630 began their journey to their four-day summer camp near Bad Windsheim.

Photo by Mark Heeter



To view additional photos of community events and celebrations, visit the U.S. Army Garrison Schweinfurt’s flickr Web page, www.flickr.com/photos/schweinfurtpao/sets/.



Back 2 School

First day of school for grades 1 - 12: August 31



Things to know

- Is my student registered for school?
- Does my student have a lunch ticket with AAFES or need a packed lunch?
- Does my student have a bus pass?
- Does my student know what time school starts?
- Does my student know what time school is out?
- Does my student have supplies for school?

USAG Ansbach

New Student/Family Orientations

- Rainbow Elementary - Aug. 24, 11:30 a.m.
- Illesheim Elementary - Aug. 25, 9 a.m.
- Ansbach Middle/High - Aug. 27, 1 p.m.
- Ansbach Elementary welcome barbecue - Aug. 28, 12:30-3 p.m.
- Rainbow Elementary welcome barbecue - Aug. 28, 3-5 p.m.

Open House

- Ansbach Middle/High - Sept. 3, 5 p.m.
- Rainbow Elementary - Sept. 8, 4:30 p.m.
- Ansbach Elementary - Sept. 9, 5 p.m.
- Illesheim Elementary - Sept. 10, 5 p.m.

Kindergarten start date - Sept. 8

School Liaison Transition Specialist - Derek Hyde, DSN 467-2098

USAG Bamberg

New Student/Family Orientations

- Bamberg Elementary - Aug. 28, 1 p.m.
- Bamberg Middle/High - Aug. 28, 1 p.m.

Kindergarten start date - Sept. 8-10

(Staggered Kindergarten Start - Parents will be informed when their kindergartener will attend during the home visit)

Sure Start first day - Sept. 14-15 (Staggered Start for Sure Start Students)

School Liaison Transition Specialist - Kim Kozel, DSN 469-7891

USAG Garmisch

New Student/Family Orientations

- Garmisch Elementary/Middle Kindergarten - Aug. 27

Kindergarten home visits - Aug. 31 to Sept. 3

Kindergarten start date - Sept. 4

Child, Youth & School Services Chief - Ellen Harris, DSN 440-2393

USAG Grafenwoehr

New Student/Family Orientations

- Vilseck Elementary - Aug. 20, 9 a.m., 1 p.m. and 4 p.m.
- Grafenwoehr Elementary - Aug. 25, 9 a.m.
- Vilseck High - Aug. 27, 6 p.m.
- Netzaberg Middle - Aug. 28, 1 p.m.

Open House

- Netzaberg Middle - Sept. 3, 4-6 p.m.
- Grafenwoehr Elementary - Sept. 10, 4:30-5:30 p.m.
- Vilseck Elementary - Sept. 10, 6-7 p.m.
- Vilseck High - Sept. 15, 6-8 p.m.
- Netzaberg Elementary - Sept. 17, 4-6 p.m.

Kindergarten start date

- Netzaberg Elementary - Aug. 31, 8 a.m. -10 a.m. with parent or guardian

Home visits - Aug. 31 - Sept. 4

- Netzaberg Elementary - Sept. 8
- Vilseck Elementary - Sept. 8 and 9 (half of the students on Sept. 8, the other half on Sept. 9)
- Grafenwoehr Elementary - Sept. 8

Sure Start first day - Sept. 15

School Liaison Transition Specialist - Ann Bruennig, DSN 475-1770

USAG Hohenfels

Open House

- Hohenfels Middle/High - Sept. 16, 5:30 p.m.
- Hohenfels Elementary - Sept. 17, 4:40 p.m.

Kindergarten start date - Sept. 8

Sure Start first day - Sept. 15

School Liaison Transition Specialist - Michele Wolff DSN 466-2783

USAG Schweinfurt

New Student/Family Orientations

- Schweinfurt Elementary Aug. 25, 10-11 a.m.
- Schweinfurt Middle - Back to School Picnic Aug. 27, 12-2 p.m.
- 6th graders - Aug. 27, 1-2 p.m.
- 7th and 8th graders - Aug. 27, 2-3 p.m.
- Bamberg High - Aug. 28, 1 p.m.

Schweinfurt Elementary Kindergarten start date - Aug. 28, 12-2 p.m.

Open House

- Schweinfurt Elementary - Sept. 9, 3:30-5:30 p.m.
- Schweinfurt Middle - Sept. 10, 4-6 p.m.

Kindergarten start date - Sept. 8

School Liaison Transition Specialist - Beth Potter, DSN 354-6090

Introducing Tutor.com

Free on-line tutoring
for Army families



by ANN BRUENNIG
USAG Grafenwoehr SLO

Stuck on a grueling geometry problem; need someone to check your book report for spelling; want to get a head start on next years science? Then Tutor.com is the resource for you.

The U.S. Army Family, Morale, Welfare & Recreation's Child, Youth and School Services has contracted with Tutor.com to provide free one-on-one tutoring to Army affiliated Families, including: active, wounded, reserve, National Guard and Army civilians.

The Army had a few trial runs for this service and the response was outstanding.

"I think this will be wonderful for military families. If the Soldier is deployed or gone and the spouse has to manage everything, this is one resource that is very convenient. Hopefully the military will continue. Thanks," said an Army trial user.

Students can find math help for elementary math, middle grades or basic math, algebra, algebra II, geometry, calculus, trigonometry, and statistics. Tutoring is available for elementary science, biology, earth science, chemistry, and physics, as well as with history questions, geography questions, and social studies questions.

Students can find English help for vocabulary, grammar, writing, and literature.

In addition, adult learners can

find help with all of the above, plus specialized resources for resume writing and job search, GED prep and Citizenship test prep.

"My tutor was very helpful with everything I need help with. She showed me step by step on how to do everything. Thank you to the staff that made this possible. I hope you keep this a free service," said an Army trial student.

Tutor.com is available to all students via the web on demand. Students can access all types of homework resources and connect to a tutor for assistance with any educational question. All sessions are anonymous.

Tutors ultimately maintain control of the online classroom, as only one student and one tutor are in the classroom at a time using a secure connection.

All sessions are recorded and reviewed for quality control.

The learning suite contains live homework help, where students can bring a question to a tutor and the tutors are real people - subject matter experts - ready to provide help.

Answers are never given, instead students are given the support and instruction needed to learn the material.

All sessions are anonymous, students only know a tutor's first name and last initial and tutors only know the student's grade and subject chosen for help.

The skills center is a module in the learning suite that contains access to live tutors, and a collection

of educationally sound, vetted self-help homework resources arranged by topic and searchable by keyword.

The "Live Homework Help" tutors match their tutoring style and the pace of the lesson to meet the needs of the student.

Tutors never do the work for the student, but provide the instruction and support needed as students do the work themselves.

At the end of each session the tutor ensures the student has a complete understanding of the topic.

The service is always open and available. 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Tutor.com tutors can help students in kindergarten to 12th grade, students in college or community college and adults going back to school or needing a refresher on a subject matter question, studying for the GED, taking the citizenship test, or writing a resume.

To gain access to this program, go to www.myarmyonesource.com/cyss_tutor.

First time users will go here to register with www.myarmyonesource.com and receive the password they'll need to login into the Tutor.com Learning Suite.

Once registered the students will be able to login via www.myarmyonesource.com/cyss_tutor.

For more information about Tutor.com, contact your school liaison transition specialist.

Accessible 24/7 from an internet-enabled PC or MAC via
www.myarmyonesource.com/cyss_tutor



tutor.com

20 tips for parents to make school a success

Compiled by
DAMON MCGIBBONEY
USAG Schweinfurt

ask questions. That is how we learn.

12. A stress free child is a happy child. A happy child will do better in school.

13. Children should start reviewing notes at least three days before a test. Don't wait until the night before or worse, the day of the test to study for it.

14. Children should write down their assignments carefully. Have the number of a few classmates in case you forget to write it down.

15. Parents, be a role model to your children. Your children learn from you. Be positive and supportive of the school system and teachers.

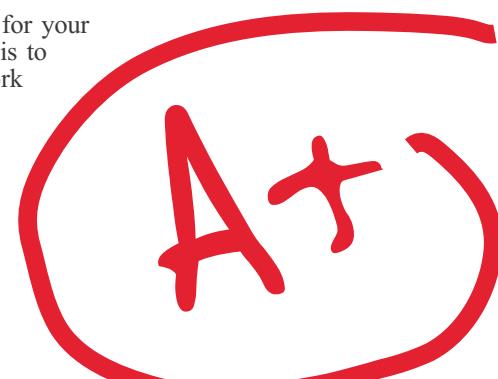
16. Have your child read to you often and regularly.

17. Have them put all of their things in their room right when they get home. This will alleviate the chances of losing or misplacing something. More time is wasted looking for a lost shoe or where they put their book sack.

18. Children should take notes when the teacher repeats something, tells them to write it down or that is very important or it will be on a test, or if she writes it on the board.

19. Don't cheat, don't be lazy, do your projects and assignments like reports, ahead of time. Study and learn. You will be proud of yourself.

20. During tests, read all of the directions, follow directions, read the questions carefully, and double check your answers if you have time after you are done.



GI Bill offers flexibility for those eligible

continued from Page 1
 place we are (in) to process the enrollment (certifications) when the schools start to come in with that information," he said.

On average, processing times to verify eligibility can take from a few weeks up to a few months, Wilson said. However, colleges and universities have been ready to receive the enrollment applications for some time.

"We've got students at 6,800 colleges," Wilson said. "They have been engaged with information flow from VA from the beginning."

The VA already is processing fall enrollment forms, he noted.

"The important issue, though, is getting that request into us as soon as possible. We are already at the point now where the fall enrollment is starting to hit us; our high demand period for the year is upon us," he said.

The new Post-9/11 GI Bill is just one of four major education programs the VA offers, Wilson said. People should educate themselves on the different options to find the best fit.

"This is a complex program, but it is complex because of the flexibility it has," Wilson said. "The costs of education vary widely across the country, the types of training that is offered vary widely, and individuals have to be participatory in this process."

"They have to be actively engaged to understand what their benefits do for them or what they don't do for them so that they can maximize the benefits of all of our programs."

In fact, "many individuals are eligible for multiple programs," he said.

Servicemembers' spouses and children may be eligible for benefits, as well.

"Transferability of education benefits has been one of the most requested and largest requests from the field and fleet, particularly from family support and advocacy groups," said Bob Clark, assistant director of Accession Policy for the Office of the Deputy Undersecretary of Defense for Military Personnel Policy, who also attended the roundtable.

To be eligible to transfer benefits to family members, servicemembers must first qualify for the Post 9/11 GI Bill, Clark said.

Servicemembers must have qualifying active duty since Sept. 11, 2001, and must be serving in the armed forces either on active duty or in the selective reserves on Aug. 1, 2009, Clark said. "That means that it doesn't apply to members of the individual ready reserve, those who retired or separated."

"The provision was included in law to recruit and retain the current force, and requires a member [to be] of that force on or after that date the program becomes effective," he continued. "To be eligible, you must have served six years and commit to four additional years."

Clark said servicemembers can verify their family members' eligibility by checking the Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System. "[They] must be listed in DEERS and must be eligible for benefits," Clark said. "They must be either a spouse or a child who [is] eligible for

benefits, which means children under the age of 21 or 23 as a full-time student."

When servicemembers' children use the benefit, they use it the same way as a veteran, Wilson said.

"They would go to our GI Bill Web site [and] apply online," he explained. "After service approval and application to VA, we would issue them a certificate of eligibility."

Students then take the certificate to their school, and their school's VA certifying official will report to the VA the same information they would have reported if the veteran would have been using the benefit, Wilson said.

Children can start using the benefit at 18 years old or after obtaining a high school diploma or equivalent, or until the day they turn 26, Clark said.

On the other hand, "A spouse is treated exactly like the sponsor; they can use the benefit while the sponsor is on active duty and for up to 15 years after the sponsor's last separation," he said.

Servicemembers can select the months they have available - up to 36 months total - to share with each family member, and select the period of time in whole months, Clark said. Their application will be sent to their service to approve before being sent to the VA database.

For information on the transferability process, servicemembers should contact their service, and for use of the transfer benefit, they should visit the VA Web site, Wilson said.

"This is a program that the VA will be administering on behalf of [the Defense Department]," Wilson said. "[The department] will

be determining eligibility, so if the issue involves that of determining the eligibility, the individual will be working with [the department]."

"When it comes to the point where the individual is interested in actually using the benefit, they will come to VA," he said.

Wilson and Clark both added that the new Post-9/11 GI Bill is flexible. This flexibility applies to those servicemembers who came into the military under the Montgomery GI Bill era, but think they don't qualify for benefits under the new 9/11 Post GI Bill.

"A person can use all of their Montgomery GI Bill benefits, then come in and apply for Chapter 33 and receive 12 more months of benefits under Chapter 33," Wilson said. "Because they are no longer entitled to the Montgomery GI Bill, they are not giving up that entitlement; they have used up that entitlement."

Shelley Caywood, Education Services Specialist at the Grafenwoehr Education Center, was enthusiastic about the changes made to VA benefits in the Post 9/11 GI Bill.

"There's always been a lot of great VA education benefits, but the new Post 9/11 GI Bill covers more people, pays more, is more flexible," said Caywood. "We really encourage Soldiers to come into the Education Center to find out what available to them now."

For questions on the Post-9/11 GI Bill visit <http://www.gibill.va.gov/> or call DSN 475-6785, CIV 09641-83-6786.

Joy Awe of the Bavarian News contributed to this article.

Operation Rising Star calls on community for support

continued from Page 1

Grafenwoehr first place winner will receive \$500 dollars cash and a chance to advance to the televised Finals competition. Second and third place winners also receive cash prizes.

First place winners from each installation will submit videos of their performances to the Family and Morale, Welfare and Recreation Army Entertainment Division. MWR judges will then choose the top twelve performers to compete before a panel of celebrity judges and industry professionals in the live televised Operation Rising Star Finals Nov. 14-21 in Fort Belvoir, VA. The competition will air on the Pentagon Channel.

The winner of Operation Rising

Star will receive The Ultimate Music Recording Experience, a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to record a three-song demo CD in Los Angeles, California on an all-expense-paid trip for two, as well as be provided with vocal coaching, professional arrangement, and sound engineering.

Audience participation is crucial to a participant's success in the competition. After singing a cappella before three judges in the first round, contestants will perform before an audience on Sept. 18 at 7 p.m. at the Performing Arts Center. Audience votes will count for 50 percent of each singer's score.

"It's very important to have an audience at the local competition," said last year's winner, Family Member Joyce Dodson. "You could be a better

singer than your opponent, but if they invite their whole Brigade to cheer them on, and you're there with only your immediate family or a few friends, there's no way you're going to win."

"I was working at the Schweinfurt In-and-Out-Processing Facility and my husband was stationed in Bamberg... and I sent all of them emails reminding them to turn out and vote for me," continued Dodson.

The singers are not the only big winners in Operation Rising Star. Family Readiness Groups or local units can also take home a \$300 spirit award for loudly and enthusiastically supporting their contestant. Each audience member receives one ballot, and those who purchase appetizers will

receive a second one.

Local competitions will be held at 35 installations around the world. Past winners have not only advanced from larger installations. Last year's overall winner, Joyce Dodson, originally competed in Schweinfurt.

Local winners performance videos will be available to view and rate online. Second and third place finalists in the televised finals will receive cash prizes of \$1000 and \$500.

Even if singing is not really your strong suit, come out to enjoy an evening of free entertainment, support local contestants, and cast your vote to help Operation Rising Star make entertainment history. Regardless who wins, audience members are in for a night of world-class performances.

Mark Carr, MWR Recreation Assistant, encourages singers to come out to practice at karaoke night at The Zone in the Langebruck Center in Vilseck.

"Singers can use this opportunity to practice, so when they get out in front of an audience you're ready," said Carr. "They won't be as nervous, and they feel comfortable. They can really do their best- practice always makes perfect!"

Carr hosts karaoke at The Zone every third Friday. The next karaoke night will be September 18.

To learn more about Operation Rising Star, including official rules, details, and participating locations, visit www.oprizingstar.com. Contestant applications are available at the Grafenwoehr Performing Arts Center.

AFC Survey gauges program success, vital for improvements

continued from Page 1

Part of the holistic Army Family Covenant Assessment in Europe that began earlier in July with focus groups at seven Army Europe garrisons, the online survey will gauge community satisfaction with all aspects of Covenant-

related programs and services: health care; housing; youth services; single Soldier programs as well as family, morale, welfare and recreation, and other quality-of-life programs.

"It is imperative we recognize that, after eight years of sustained combat operations, the needs of our Soldiers

and families have changed and continue to evolve," added Farrell.

"This assessment will help us get ahead of the bow wave on these changes," he said.

"To say the Army Family Covenant is doing 'something' is simply not good enough," he continued. "To say we are

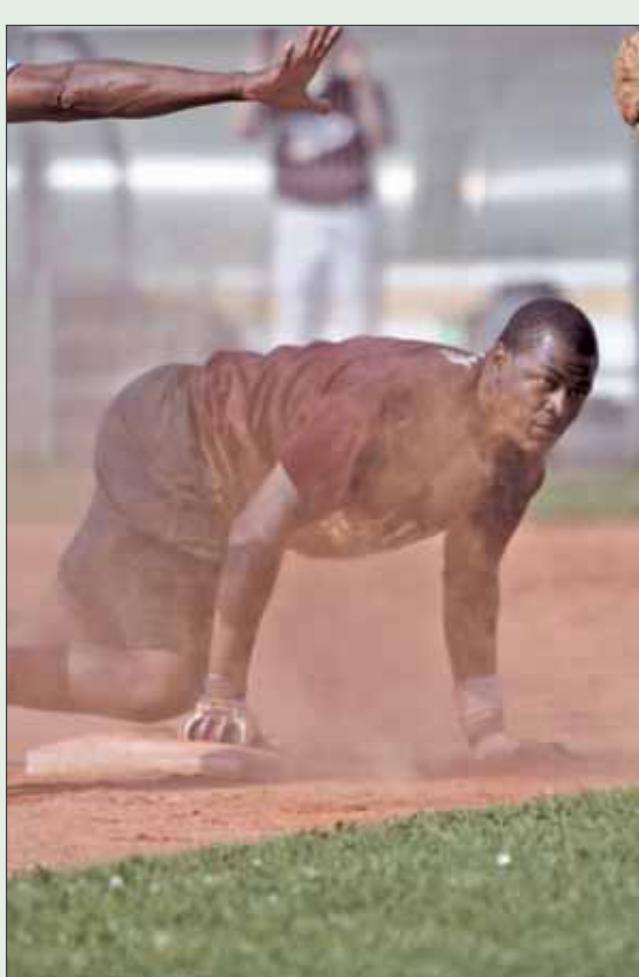
helping it do the best possible things – the 'right things' – for the Army in Europe Family is our collective responsibility.

"This is true for all Soldiers and families across our Army," he concluded.

The simple survey takes only a few

brief minutes to complete, and can be accessed from any government or home computer at <http://www.armymwr.com/fmwr/AFC/survey.htm>.

Officials recommend to have a voice in improving Covenant support to you and your family by participating in the survey.



Play ball!

Installation Management Command Europe congratulates the 18 teams who competed in the annual IMCOM-E Unit-Level Softball Championship at U.S. Army Garrison Grafenwoehr Aug. 6-9.

USAG Heidelberg's V Corps won the event while USAG Bamberg's 4-319 and USAG Ansbach's Delta 2-159 ARB placed second and third respectively.

Far left: A member of USAG Grafenwoehr's 561st Medical Unit is called safe as he reaches a base.

Left: A member of the winning V Corps team of USAG Bamberg fields a ball before throwing it to a teammate.

Photos by Sgt. Adam Heller